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*Capt. Robert V. Mahon.*



*The Story of*  
BATTERY D  
304th FIELD ARTILLERY

SEPTEMBER 1917  
TO  
MAY 1919

WRITTEN BY THE FOLLOWING MEN OF THE BATTERY

CORPORAL JOSEPH GLASS  
BATTERY HISTORIAN

CORPORAL HENRY L. MILLER  
PRIVATE OSMUND O'BRIEN

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# IN MEMORIAM

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED TO OUR GALLANT  
COMRADES WHO LOST THEIR  
LIVES IN SERVICE WITH THE  
BATTERY IN FRANCE. THE  
MEMORY OF THEIR SACRIFICE  
WILL ALWAYS BE AN  
INSPIRATION  
TO US

## THE MEMORIAL MEDAL



THIS MEDAL STRUCK IN BRONZE WAS SENT TO THE  
FAMILY OF EVERY MAN IN THE 304th F. A. WHO  
LOST HIS LIFE IN ACTION. ON THE REVERSE IS THE  
INSCRIPTION "TO COMMEMORATE THE GLORIOUS  
DEAD OF THE 304th FIELD ARTILLERY  
IN THE GREAT WAR  
FOR PEACE."

AUG 15 1919

# HONOR ROLL

THE FOLLOWING MEN OF THE BATTERY  
DIED IN FRANCE:

SERGEANT GEORGE H. WEINHAUER

Wounded in action near Chery Chartreuve, September 3rd, 1918. Died on way to Base Hospital, September 6, 1918.

PRIVATE RUDOLPH J. BAKKEN

Wounded in action near Pont a Lune, Argonne Forest, October 2, 1918. Died on way to Field Hospital same day.

PRIVATE AXEL T. BOOM

Died of disease, February 25, 1919, at Evacuation Hospital No. 11.

PRIVATE OTTO BRYANT

Killed in action near Chery Chartreuve, August 23, 1918.

PRIVATE EDWARD KALF

Wounded in action near Chery Chartreuve, August 23, 1918. Died in hospital September 1, 1918.

PRIVATE FRED C. LINCOLN

Killed in action near Vauxcerc, September 10, 1918.

PRIVATE EARL H. McDEVITT

Wounded in action near Vauxcerc, September 10, 1918. Died in hospital September 11, 1918.

PRIVATE MICHAEL PESSALANO

Killed in action near Vauxcerc, September 10, 1918.

PRIVATE ANTONIO VANNINI

Killed in action near Chery Chartreuve, August 23, 1918.



*Pvt. Earl McDevitt.*



*Pvt. Fred C. Lincoln.*



*Pvt. Antonio Vannini.*



*Pvt. Edvard Kalf.*



*Sgt. George H. Weinbauer.*



*Pvt. Axel T. Boom.*



*Pvt. Rudolph Bakken.*



*Pvt. Michael Pessalano.*



*Pvt. Otto Bryant.*

## LIST OF WOUNDED

THE FOLLOWING MEN OF THE BATTERY WERE  
WOUNDED IN ACTION:

CORPORAL CLARENCE E. RUCKER  
PRIVATE JOSEPH AGNELLI  
PRIVATE ARTHUR W. CLAVITER  
PRIVATE CHARLES J. FRID  
PRIVATE JOHN J. HORNUNG  
PRIVATE OLAUS JOHNSON  
PRIVATE JOHN MEEHAN  
PRIVATE JOHN R. PARSONS  
PRIVATE GEORGE TANSEY

## FOREWORD



THIS is my farewell to the men of Battery D whom I had the honor to command through our campaign in France. I know they did their best, and they deserve praise for the record made.

There is a warm bond of sympathy between all men who shared the perils together, and only they can realize how this sympathy and fellowship softened the hardships, and hardened the nerves for any dangers that came our way. Beyond all praise, and beyond the honors of military decorations, is the exalted spirit of the soldier who serves the flag in battle. In darkness and storm, and the horrors of war, it is this spirit that helps us to carry on. Praise for the soldier means little to him; it is not necessary. He is conscious of this spirit, and that suffices. So nothing need be said by me of the men of Battery D in the way of praise. They and I fully understand one another.

It was our good chance that our Battery was the first of our regiment to fire on the enemy at the front, and that it also fired the last shells in the Division on the afternoon of November 10th across the Meuse. General Briggs said that our Battery was the first mounted organization of the American Army to cross the River Vesle. These facts are interesting even if they justify no special distinction for us. They do show, however, that we were ready when the orders came.

For our dead, and the mothers and kin who still grieve for them, nothing can be said. They have paid and are still paying for our Victory. I know what it means. My devoted mother wore out her dear heart with anxiety and suspense. She saw me come back safely and then passed away; as if it were all finished. So to these mothers and kin of our dead I would say that I know their hearts.

But now the order comes "Sound Off," the band plays, and the world moves; and we now know that it moves forward to the Peace we fought for.

ROBERT V. MAHON,  
Captain 304th F. A.,  
Commanding Battery D.



# *The Story of Battery D.*

## Chapter I.

### CAMP UPTON.

*September, 1917, to April 22, 1918.*



BRILLIANT Saturday afternoon in the latter part of September, 1917, found the first men assigned to the 304th Field Artillery assembled in their new quarters, barracks J35 and J54, on 3rd Avenue, near 12th Street. Like so many immigrants they were ranged around the big barracks rooms, making themselves comfortable on their big bundles of new army possessions. Officers were busy among the men, looking for specialists in different lines, such as musicians for the band, prospective mess sergeants, mechanics and cooks. Almost immediately the crowd was further split into separate groups, each group to constitute the nucleus of a battery. Batteries E and F were assigned to the upper floor of J35, while D Battery was installed on the lower floor, which contained the mess hall as well.

The men had arrived in the camp several days previous to this, following a hearty send-off from New York, many demonstrations of good-will from the folks along the railroad route, and the entry into the sprawling, half-finished camp, amid the cheers and jibes of the workers and vendors of every color, kind and description. There had followed several feverish days taken up with the mustering in, medical inspections, and the issuing of clothing and equipment. Then the contingents had been split into separate groups, this group designated 306th Infantry, this one 305th Machine Gun Battalion, this one 304th Field Artillery, and each group marched off to its permanent organization.

Up to this point the men had not found army existence the physically strenuous, disciplined life they had anticipated. Outside of considerable confusion their time had been mostly their own and work had been the exception rather than the rule. But this happy condition was rudely altered on the following Monday morning, when there appeared on the bulletin board the new training schedule. Reveille at 5 A. M.; inspection at 7; drill from 7:30 to 11:45; afternoon drill from 1 to 5; retreat at 5:30. And that schedule was rigidly adhered to. Despite groans and growls and kicks and howls, despite many a vanishing waist-line and double chin, the work of making Battery D physically fit went steadily on. Each day was just a round of drill and hike, and hike and drill, and then some one higher up conceived the brilliant idea of having the rookies extract the numerous stumps from the camp area. Ordin-

arily work of this kind would have furnished an excellent opportunity for rest from the strenuous drill and hike—but not with these military task-masters on the job. With more officers than one could keep track of, in addition to the three regular army sergeants, standing over the men like so many Simon Legrees, the stumps came out thick and fast. This was before the day of the battery non-commissioned officer, so that many a worthy rookie who later would have been insulted at the suggestion of his handling a pick or shovel, here pitched in and did his bit, goaded into further effort by the beloved Kershaw, who was here, there and everywhere, with his choice regular army vocabulary. It would probably be a difficult task to locate Kershaw's worst enemy from among the host who would claim the honor. During these days Kershaw extracted the last degree of pleasure out of "riding" little Al Murphy, who was manfully trying to stand up under the strain of a rapidly receding waist-line. After several months of tumultuous relations with the rest of the men, Kershaw finally faded out of the life of Battery D.

At this time Lieutenant MacDougall was a member of Battery D. MacDougall! The mere mention of the name was enough to start the sweat on any rookie. Twice around the big double field at double time was MacDougall's idea of a warming-up gallop, and as Louis Hyman, Charlie Krause and several others would come limping along in the rear after one of these performances they never failed to draw forth a few sarcastic remarks for their failure to "carry on." Then would come the boxing bouts. Nothing less than blood and plenty of it, or a cold knockout would satisfy MacDougall. Next a song rehearsal, usually that splendid old ballad, "When We Get Our Materiel." Then some more drilling and finally a quick-time hike back to the barracks to the cadence of MacDougall's snappy, cut short, "one, two, three, four." Lieutenant MacDougall's fame as an exponent of the strenuous life soon spread through the regiment, and in course of time, even through the division and beyond.

After four weeks of this strenuous physical course, a new schedule went into effect. Lectures were to occupy a considerable part of the day. Lieutenant Eberstadt lectured on the materiel that the battery would use, while Lieutenant Richard gave several discourses on the care of the horse. Gun-drill also became part of the curriculum, and the command "cannoneers, mount!" "change posts!" and "rear of your pieces, fall in!" soon became familiar sounds.

It was at this time that the night non-commissioned officers' school was started. The captain generally presided at these gatherings and usually favored the men with a very long lecture. The Drill Regulations was digested from cover to cover, especially those parts that bore on guard duty and military discipline and courtesy. In addition, special subjects were assigned to certain men for discussion. One very notable address was that by Sergeant Harry Gordon, late of the regular army, in which he initiated the men into the mysteries of the gas mask. As he referred to the different "mechanicals" in the box of the mask, and went on to warn the men against allowing "salima" to get into the mouthpiece, even the officers threatened to lose some of their reserve. Every one was impressed, and wished that Gordon might have the opportunity to apply his knowledge on the battlefields of France, but unhap-



*First Platoon Overseas.*

pily, he developed ear-trouble at the last moment, so that he was unable to hear the call to France at all, as result of which the depot brigade at Camp Upton has had the benefit of that wisdom ever since.

Battery D was favored by still another regular army man, one Elgar, an alleged supply sergeant. Elgar hung around for about two weeks, during which time he furnished the comedy element for the battery, particularly as the butt for John Murphy's jokes. After several vain attempts to stand on his dignity, and to assert his authority, Elgar threw up the sponge and departed for parts where his talents would be more appreciated.

The second contingent of D Battery arrived in the camp on October 10th and was merged with the original battery about a week later. About the same time the battery moved to the new artillery section, just completed and occupied the entire barracks building on the northeast corner of 4th Avenue and 13th Street. As the battery continued to grow the overflow building on the opposite side of 13th Street was also taken over.

Among the men of the second contingent was David Jones, one of America's foremost vaudeville stars. Jones claimed to be in very poor health, and those who slept near him testified to the terrible spasms he would have each night, in one of which it was feared he would pass away. But Jones was an actor, and considering the circumstances no one knew just what to think. Many thought that a clew to Jones' case might be furnished by a story he told of one of the recruits of the 367th Infantry, the colored regiment which was training in the camp. This recruit was seen snatching up bits of paper from the ground, examining them and throwing them down again with the exclamation, "Dat's not it! Dat's not it! Dat's not it!" After several days of this he was put under observation and marked for discharge. As his dis-



*Second Platoon Overseas.*

charge papers were handed to him, he gazed at them for several moments and then exclaimed, "Dat's it!" Jones played at the different camp Y. M. C. A.'s nightly, and gave numerous highly appreciated shows in the battery mess-hall, but as the season waned and the time for leaving approached, he found his way into the base hospital, and so passed out of the military life.

All this was the comedy element, which played its important part as a diversion from the strenuous routine of preparation which went relentlessly on. A battery spirit and a battery organization began to develop and in this the non-commissioned officers played a big part. First Sergeant Oscar L. French was a happy contrast to the other regular army men. Full of energy and enthusiasm, French was behind everything that tended to the well-being of the men and of the battery. Other non-commissioned officers were appointed by the captain. Among the first appointments were Lowell, Green, Gleason, Koen, Munday, Pons, Manderson, and Ghelardi. It is a fact that men coming direct from civil life find the arbitrary military authority, even of a non-commissioned officer, very irksome, so it is inevitable that the popularity of many of the newly appointed men took a sudden drop on their being "made." "Barney" Lowell was one of the few exceptions to this rule, as no one could meet the searching gaze of Barney's honest blue eyes and retain even the trace of resentment. One of the very first appointments was that of Antonio Joachim Simas as supply sergeant. All day long Joachim would sit in solitary splendor in the little supply room, while his satellites busied themselves with the supply work. Acting merely as the judge, and the court of last appeal, Simas would meet every appeal for new equipment with the overworked army "out of luck." As the work of the supply department multiplied, Simas ceased to function properly and was removed, or resigned, and the efficient Clackner

took the post. As proof that "you can't keep a good man down," however, Simas came back strong as a combatant member of the battery when the real test came.

As the fire company of the regiment, Battery D had many opportunities to prove its speed in getting into action. Several night alarms were turned in, and on these occasions the men had hardly scrambled into their clothes and lined up outside, before the lightning hose cart squad, in charge of Corporal Koen, came dashing around the corner of 13th Street, dragging the cart behind them. None of these night calls required the efforts of D Battery, but on the occasion of the infirmary fire the battery had plenty of opportunity to show its mettle. The alarm was given as the men were going to mess after a hard morning's work. The whole infirmary building on the opposite side of 4th Avenue seemed to be ablaze as the men swarmed out of the barracks. Without hesitation, the men quickly rounded up the fire-buckets from the neighboring buildings and started after the blaze. Bucket lines were established and such excellent work was done that the blaze was effectively held in check until the arrival of the camp firemen, when the blaze was finally extinguished. Several of the D Battery fire-fighters were well drenched, notably Lieutenant Eberstadt and "Bobby" Taylor.

Athletics, of course, played an important part in the work, and in the different competitions the battery made a very creditable showing. In the regimental athletic meet D battery proved an easy winner, with such stars as Gordon, Ghelardi, and Andrew Nelson. Interest was further stimulated when the popular Ruggiero made the divisional football team. A boxing competition was held with E Battery which resulted in a tie. Vineer and Ruggiero won for D, while Propp and Von Pless lost to Creter and Goodwin of E battery. The baseball team, under the management of Sergeant Pons, had defeated E battery 16 to 3 and lost to C 8 to 5 when events brought the season to an abrupt close. An amusing feature of the baseball season was the effort of "Bob" Freedman to displace Joachim Simas as first sacker of the battery team. With much talk and more noise, Freedman, nevertheless, never had a chance against Simas, with his excellent all-around work, in addition to the halo of his sergeant's stripes.

Near the end of November a new system of training was instituted. Lieutenant Eberstadt was in charge of the battery at this time, Captain Mahon having gone to the Fort Sill artillery school of fire. The battery was divided into three groups—cannoneers, drivers, and battery commander's detail, and the familiar order of the day became "Cannoneers outside; drivers in the mess-hall; B. C. detail in the overflow."

Lieutenant Richard conducted the work of the cannoneers, and all day long could be heard his "Aiming point, flagpole on Tower Hill," followed by the inevitable "Aiming point identified." The mysteries of the sights and of the bubbles became second nature to the men assigned to this work, prominent among whom were Ronayne, Cross, Kotba, McFadden and Munday.

As the tables of organization at this time designated the 304th as a motor-drawn regiment, the training of the drivers had principally to do with the workings of the gasoline engine. At the start the instruction was conducted by Lieutenant MacDougall, ably assisted by Murray and McDonough.



*Third Platoon Overseas.*

The lieutenant instituted a little fad of his own, that of breaking the monotony of the day by a cross-country run every hour or so, much to the disgust of the easy-going mechanics. In December Lieutenant MacDougall was transferred to Headquarters Company, and the course was taken over by several new lieutenants, one after another, and seemed to lag considerably.

The B. C. Detail instruction was conducted by Lieutenant Tweedy, and proved to be intensely interesting to those assigned to this branch of the work. The instruction covered such subjects as scouting, map-making, computation of firing data, signaling, and liaison. In part lectures, and part work in the open, with just enough of competition to keep the interest at high pitch, splendid progress was made in this branch of the work: so much so that D battery's detail came to be generally recognized as the best in the regiment. In the B. C. work proper, Sergeant Ostertag, with an uncanny aptitude for work of this kind, stood out as the leader, while Altman excelled at the signal work.

On December 7th the battery received a large number of new men, a consignment that contained all kinds of talent. Such men as Glass, Schapiro, Osterman, Aigeltinger, Grandin, Noxon, Petchtle, McDonough, Machby, Freedman and Talbot were bound to make their presence felt in any company. The B. C. Detail was the greatest gainer, with such men as Glass, Schapiro, Osterman, Petchtle and Noxon.

Through the bitter days of the coldest winter Long Island has ever known, the training went steadily on. Rifles were issued necessitating a wearisome round of aiming and sighting drills and practice at the manual of arms. Gas masks were issued, not enough to go around, but enough to practice with, and drills were held, usually conducted by Lieutenant Norris. Considerable enter-



*Fourth Platoon Overseas.*

tainment was furnished by the innovations in the gas drill, for example, Pat Curran's attempts to pass on the command "Send two picks and five shovels to shelter number five." The combination of the gas mask and Pat's dialect was too much for the next man.

The best guarantee the men had against the cold of these bitter days was in the person of Louis Hyman. Old Hyman had charge of the various furnaces. Flat feet and broken arches had made it impossible for him to keep up with the other men in the drills and hikes, and he had been made permanent room orderly. Hyman took the many jibes about his "ducking" the real work good naturedly and insisted he was anxious to do his bit to the best of his ability. Transferred to the infantry at the last moment, his splendid work as a doughboy is testified to by all who had a chance to judge. He now lies buried at the furthest point of American advance on the Aisne, the victim of a German sniper's bullet on the night the division was relieved from that fiery front.

Where a large number of men are living together in this manner there are bound to be a thousand and one little happenings of a purely personal nature which the men like to recall. And D battery was no exception to this general rule. There was Morris Greenbaum's "Right front into line" while drilling a single squad in the N. C. O. competition; and Harry Green's mending "Semel, Shimmel, close op, close op" while on the march; and Joyce, or Jyce, as he called himself, the recruit from Devens, who would find his shoes and lose his hat, then find his hat and lose his shoes and coat, until, in despair, he was shipped off to Camp Gordon; and Klesmer and his cousin Kleinberg, a vaudeville team in themselves; and others almost without number.

Towards the end of February rumors of big events filled the air. The

captain was coming back and the battery was to fire on the rifle range. The two events occurred almost simultaneously, so that the captain had hardly arrived before he was leading the battery off to the range. The weather was miserable, cold and rainy, and the range was a sea of mud. Very creditable scores were made by the men of the battery, however, highest among which were those of Philpot, Cross, Lambe and Taylor.

Near the end of March the battery received a new consignment of men, mainly from Buffalo and vicinity. Outstanding among these men were Mayer and Marshall. Mayer, on account of his magnificent bearing and appearance; Marshall, because he claimed he wanted to go with the infantry. The new men received a very strenuous course of drill under Lowell and Pons and were very soon fitted into the general scheme of things.

And then, one day, like lightning out of a clear sky, came the big news. The division was going over. Lieutenant Eberstadt, with a sense for the dramatic, made the momentous announcement to a crowded mess-hall. Many degrees of emotion may have been observed, Abie Skoler, for one, emitting copious tears. Passes were immediately granted to all of the men and for several days all work was at a standstill. But it soon developed that the artillery would not go just yet. One after the other the different units of the division followed the engineers out of the camp, until only the artillery remained. Finally the order came for the artillery to move. There followed a feverish week end of preparation. Many new men were enrolled and fully equipped, inspections were held, and battery property packed and shipped.

The last day at Upton was a miserably cold, rainy Sunday, April 21st, but not even the mud and the downpour could discourage the friends and relatives of the men who had telephoned home of the impending departure. All day long the mess-hall was crowded with the home folks and it was not until relentless military authority gave the order that the reluctant farewells were said. During the evening packs were rolled, rations and ammunition issued, and finally, at 3 A. M., the battery was assembled in the mess-hall for the last time. Following brief instructions from the captain, the 1st sergeant's order to "Fall in outside" was given and battery D was off for the war.



## Chapter II.

### THE TRIP ACROSS AND EARLY DAYS IN FRANCE.

*April 22, 1918, to May 9, 1918.*

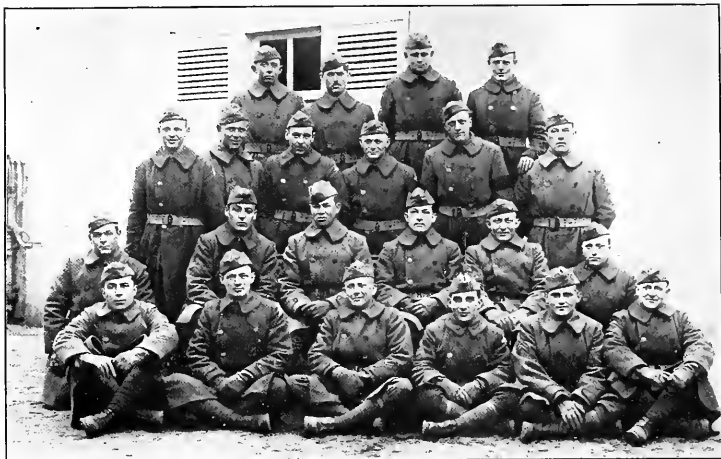


ON Monday, April 22nd, Anno Domini, 1918, at 3:30 o'clock in the forenoon, and on the twenty-sixth birthday of Antonio Joachim Simas, erstwhile Supply Sergeant of our battery, we left our barracks at Camp Upton, Long Island, and started on our meanderings over the face of the earth. For many a day past we had been enjoying a sort of military tea-party at Yaphank, but at last we were faced with the stern realities of warfare. With stout hearts, courageous spirits, and heavy packs, we marched to the railroad station, and after much delay, left the camp at five o'clock, realizing that we might be viewing it for the last time. In spite of many complaints as to our food and surroundings at Yaphank, we felt that we were leaving a place which had become almost a home to us.

We arrived at Long Island City at 7:15 A. M. and boarded the ferryboat "Hempstead." With what strange emotions did we view the receding shores of New York! The air was cool and clear, in contrast to the weather of the past few days, and the many tall buildings on the New York shore stood out clearly in the sunshine. There was no tooting of horns, no waving of flags, no shedding of tears. The Great City seemed to be dead to the fact that we were embarking on so dangerous a cruise. There was nothing but an occasional salute from some small river craft, or the wish of Godspeed from the passengers on some passing ferryboat.

Arrived at Hoboken, we were landed at Pier 5, and waited there for many hours. During this time, women from the American Red Cross served coffee and buns which we greatly appreciated, for we had had no food for many hours. After much delay, we walked up the gangplank, entered the good ship "Leviathan," and were quartered on Decks G and H. Our quarters were very cramped, squalid and unsanitary. After depositing our belongings as best we could in the little space provided, we awaited further developments in quarters, as we were not allowed on deck. At about six o'clock a mess was served, and was very satisfactory; but the journey to the mess-hall through a labyrinthian maze of crowded passageways, and the manner of serving mess in a very crowded mess-hall was unattractive, though realized by us to be necessary and unavoidable on account of the large number of men on the boat.

The next morning we arose bright and early, after having a refreshing night's sleep. It was hard to realize just where we were when we first opened our eyes and saw ourselves in these strange surroundings. Events had moved



*Non-Commissioned Officers.*

so rapidly in the past few days, that it took us some time to fully recall them to mind, and to remember how we had come into our present whereabouts. We performed our morning ablutions in salt water, this being the only kind provided, and were then rushed through another very eatable mess. Mess Sergeant Dichich was the butt of many serio-comic "knocks" in comparing the mess on board ship with the "muss" he had always provided. He, however, remained unshaken as well as unsupported (until we reached the front) in the belief that his culinary sapience was unparalleled. We could not be convinced, however, for the memory of many foodless days and sleepless nights, caused by such dishes as "rice a la Dichich," macaroni, salmon salad, "hand grenades," etc., still lingered. It has often been proven in history that a genius is never recognized in his own age. We were entirely willing that his genius be recognized, and that he receive his just desserts hereafter, in an atmosphere which would be more conducive to good cooking and roasting.

The ship remained in dock all day. Most of us were kept busy carrying blue bags aboard. The others were confined to quarters, and no one was allowed on deck.

When we arose on Wednesday morning, we felt our cots rocking slightly, and knew that we were out to sea. At noon, we were allowed on deck for the first time. Land was still in sight and many sea-gulls were flying about the sea. The ship had left the dock at 5:15 A. M. and as she was not travelling very rapidly, we were still in sight of land. The stay on deck was scheduled to last until 1:30 only, but great joy was caused by the announcement that we would be allowed on deck at will, for the remainder of the trip. For the rest of the day we were curiously examining the ship and looking into the

sea. Candies and drinks were purchased from the canteen, and the deck presented a lively sight, with the men noisily discussing the trip and the surprising events of the past few days. After the afternoon mess (only two meals a day were served to the troops on the boat, one in the morning and one in the afternoon), an "Abandon Ship" drill was held for the first time. This was conducted in the following manner: A call was blown by the Navy Bugler, followed by the call down the various hatchways "All hands abandon ship!" This was the signal for instant activity. Immediately, the men were seen hurrying to their quarters from the various parts of the ship, so that they could get their life-belts. The section chiefs called the rolls, while everyone was busy putting on his life-preserver and his cartridge belt, with one blanket folded over it. At a signal from the deck above, we hurried upstairs to a Mustering Station, where we were lined up in order, and were sent up to the upper deck as the Naval Officer there called for us. It was made clear to us that in the case of an actual ship abandonment, should any man be seen running excitedly about, he would be shot instantly. When we were gathered on the upper deck, where the life-boats were, "Recall" was sounded, and we returned to our quarters.

The decks were cleared at about seven o'clock, and all lights went out at about eight, leaving the place in pitch darkness. We had to grope our way in the dark to find our bunks. We were all finally settled for the night, however, and except for the occasional snoring of some neighbor, and the distant clug-clug of the engines, a quiet as absolute as the darkness reigned.

The next few days were uneventful, but since we were allowed on deck at will, we found enough to interest us. The sea wore a very gay aspect. As far as the eye could see, at the crest of each wave, were snow-white spats of foam, presenting the appearance of masses of clean, floating snow. The water was very gentle and beautifully colored by the dazzling sunshine. Above, as though suspended in mid-air, hung fluffy masses of fleecy white clouds, here and there delicately tinted pink. The horizon stretched about us in a complete circle, the central point of which was the "Leviathan."

The sea was not very rough and none of us were affected by rocking of the boat excepting Buckmiller and Corporal Henry Miller. "Buck" used to get sea-sick riding a plow, he said, while "Uncle Henry" used to suffer even in a rowboat on the Hudson. Henry, believing in the power of mind over matter, lay in his cot, reading "In the Hollow of his Hand," by one of his favorite New Thought authors. When Captain Mahon came around, and jestingly told him he only believed he was sick, he was greatly incensed, for his stomach had already left proof sufficient in the hollow of his hand.

Sunday arrived and how different it was from past Sundays! In military life the distinction between Sunday and the rest of the week is not so marked, especially when one is so unfortunate as to be on kitchen police. The day was spent on deck and those who were reflectively inclined, pictured in the retrospect, the last Sunday they had spent in Camp Upton. Rain in bucketfuls and mud up to the knees, a tense air of anticipation and excitement about the barracks, great hustle and bustle in equipping the new men, arrival of visitors in taxis, the presence of visitors, mothers and sweethearts in large numbers, final farewells—all were reviewed. Seven days later, and

what a difference in scene! Thousands of miles away and still being relentlessly rushed forward.

On May 1st, the convoy, consisting of five American destroyers, arrived and the ship immediately increased its speed. During the day, the following message sent by the Leviathan to one of the destroyers, by heliograph, was picked up by Corporal Altman and Private Sofio:

"Please send following by radio to Brest: Leviathan will arrive about 6:30 A. M. tomorrow; requests that anchorage bearing 123° true from Du Portzic lighthouse be clear for a radius of 500 yards."

This news was immediately spread around and caused much excitement.

That night we passed through the danger zone, and every precaution was taken. We were ordered to sleep in all of our clothes as well as in our life-preservers. Guards were stationed at every porthole and we were not even allowed to wash in the basins near them. We felt that this night would be decisive as to whether we would or would not reach our port safely.

All doubts on this score were dispelled when we were awakened, next morning, by the sound of the sinking of anchors. When, at about 7:15, we passed over deck for our mess, we saw the town of Brest on the shores in front of us. Small red sailboats were in the harbor, and destroyers were speeding back and forth. Brest was picturesquely settled in the hills and presented a pretty appearance in the sunshine. At about noon, orders were given to move off the boat, and were quickly carried out. Soon afterward, we were on a British lighter alongside of the "Leviathan," having first received a lunch consisting of two ham sandwiches, a piece of cake and an apple. Amid the cheers from the nurses, sailors and troops remaining on board, and with the band playing "Good-bye, little girl, good-bye," the lighter slowly chugged away.

Fifteen minutes later, we landed at Brest. The first sights that struck us as being odd were the boys dressed in gowns, almost like girls, and the coolies at work in the railroad yards. Requests for "cigarettes for papa" and "biscuit Americain" were numerous and were in most cases granted. After lining up, we marched up a steep hill through the town. The sights were interesting. There were few people on the streets. The children and aged folk looked healthy, but the young women looked for the most part unhealthy, and not of the best character. Stores with the sign "Commerce de Vin" were as numerous as soda fountains in America. The fields outside of the town were covered with green grass and spotted with lilac bushes, violets, buttercups and other flowers. The sweet odors from the flowers were, however, unhappily mixed with the malodorous stench caused by the imperfect sewerage system of Brest.

The sun was very hot and the road very dusty, and several of the men had to drop out, but they rejoined the battery before they reached the barracks. At Saint Saens, the order "fall out" was given, and a rest had. Many of the inhabitants gathered around, and the requests for "biscuit Americain" and cigarettes became more insistent than ever. The people had a squalid and poverty-stricken appearance. Maison Blanche was the next village we passed through and then the barracks were reached. A sign on the road announced the name "Pontenezen Barracks."

Entrance to the barracks was had through an old red wooden door with iron framework, of mediæval construction, which was opened by a guard. Old lanterns, long out of use, were fixed to the iron part of the door. High, aged looking walls, of broken stone, stretched away from the gate on both sides. Inside the walls, there was a large, well-leveled parade ground. The barracks were long concrete structures, with slate tile roofs and small gabled windows. Everything about them had the appearance of antiquity, and it was later ascertained that these very barracks had been occupied by Napoleon's troops.

The battery was assigned to barracks marked "Batt. U. 1," upstairs. We marched up low wooden steps into a long, dimly lighted room, with heavy raftered ceilings, wooden floors and small windows. Places on the floor were assigned to each section for sleeping purposes and packs were unrolled. We then washed up in fresh water drawn from springs. Candles were lit at about 9:30, until which hour it remained light. At about 10:30, supper, consisting of corned beef hash, bread and coffee was served, outdoors on the ground. It was a rather unusual sight to see men and officers squatting on the ground, and, in the dim light cast by the kitchen fire, eating with satisfaction their meager meal.

For the next few days, we did very little. Many of us were on detail at Brest, tearing down roads and unloading lumber. The rest of us found enough to interest us. Some went through the barracks, searching through every nook and cranny, in quest of some relic of Napoleon's day. Others wandered around the camp and "took in" the sights.

On Sunday, we were assembled with Headquarters Company, and marched through the neighboring country with band playing. Many pretty towns were passed through, Gouesnou, Benetine and La Rousse being among them. One of the interesting features of the day was the attempt at conversation in French with the peasants and children, on the part of the men. The country was very beautiful, and the roads were surrounded by bushes and trees and beautiful flowers. The peasants wore black velvet hats with a long streamer, called "chapeau paysan." In a quiet spot, we fell out and several vocal and instrumental selections were given by the men. We returned with band playing, feeling that we had spent a very enjoyable and interesting afternoon.

The following day we spent in the same manner. Joined by Battery C this time, we started on a march through the neighboring towns. After marching for some time, we fell out for an hour, during which time Lieutenant Elberstadt delivered a talk on French money. March was resumed, and at Cambesillac, we joined the rest of the regiment in the square surrounding the town church. A band concert was given, in the course of which, the Marseillaise and The Star-Spangled Banner were played and highly applauded. We returned in time for noon mess. In the afternoon, Captain Mahon, in the course of a lecture, advised us that we would move out early in the morning. All preparations were made to move on a moment's notice, and we retired early, expecting an early call.

At 3:00 A. M. the bugle blew. We dressed, washed, messed and packed our rolls all by candle light. We were lined up at 4:15 and left camp shortly afterward. The quiet greyness preceding dawn surrounded us as we marched

in silence towards Brest. Slowly, as the march continued and the hour grew later, pedestrians appeared, shutters were opened, and signs generally of a re-awakening world were seen. Arrived at the railroad station at Brest, we had a long wait, during which we conversed as best we could with the passersby. German, Turkish and Austrian prisoners were marched by while we waited.

We finally boarded French box cars, much smaller than American box cars, with the following inscription on them.

40 HOMMES

S CHEVAUX (EN LONG)

There was hardly room to breathe. Packs were suspended from the ceiling, and every available inch of space was used. Loaves of bread and canned food were piled up in the center of the car. The car was subdivided into compartments, so that thirty-two men could sit knee to knee. The remaining eight or nine in each car had to sit on the floor. Ventilation was furnished by means of two squares, cut on each side of the car.

The train left Brest at 8:55, and passed over very beautiful country. Green, rolling hills, sweeping valleys, squares of yellow flowers in the midst of green fields, gnarled stumps covered with vines—all this was part of the panoramic landscape as the train rolled along. We ate for the first time at 6:00 P. M., having been fifteen hours without food of any kind. Since no lights could be had, we had to remain in darkness. We tried to sleep on the benches and floors but found it impossible. It was a restless and uncomfortable night, and everyone agreed that it was the worst we had thus far experienced.

Nantes was reached at 2:00 A. M. Hot black coffee with a brandy taste, furnished by the French Red Cross, was brought on the cars, and helped to make us more comfortable. We passed through Rochefort-sur-la-Mer, Pons and other large towns, and, finally, at about 8:00 P. M., reached Bordeaux. It was a welcome sight to our eyes, for we felt that the end of the trip was near. Considerable delay was experienced between Bordeaux and the camp siding some fifteen miles away, which was reached about midnight.



*Cannoneers' Group.*

### Chapter III.

#### TRAINING PERIOD AT CAMP DE SOUGE.

*May 9, 1918, to July 9, 1918.*



**A**FTER arriving at the station, we jumped off the cars and lined up. There was a big hustle and bustle as motor trucks rushed back and forth. After considerable delay, the march was started, and through groves of trees, making a pitch dark aisle, we marched for several miles. The darkness was so intense that we could not see a foot in front of us. At last, we arrived at the long wooden structures which were to be our barracks. After hurriedly setting up wooden bunks, we retired at about 3:00 A. M. The blue bags arrived in the morning and the bed sacks were taken out of them and filled with excelsior. The barracks were then swept up and things generally set in order.

The news soon spread that the regiment had been converted into a French "75" regiment and created quite a stir. A few days later, we pulled our guns from an ordnance depot to the battery, and got our first view of them. The following Monday our regular training schedule commenced. The battery was divided into its various details and the men received instruction in their particular duties. Most of the men were on the cannons. Others were assigned to the Telephone School, the Radio School and the Machine Gun School. For the next few weeks, everybody was busy all of the time, learning the business of modern warfare. An excellent corps of instructors supervised

the work and showed an efficiency which was subsequently rarely encountered in our military experience.

An epidemic of mumps and the measles soon went the rounds, and many, including Sergeant Pons, were put in the sick bay, where they led "the life of Riley," doing nothing all day. We were put under quarantine, and were not permitted to leave the limits of the camp.

On Sundays, passes were issued to ten per cent. of each battery for Bordeaux. Q. M. trucks transported us there and back. At Bordeaux, lively sights again greeted our eyes, and made the Iowa farmers sit up and take notice. "Gin-mills," where they dispensed "red ink" and similar beverages, the much-vaunted French mademoiselles, with their "oo-la-la," automobiles, trolley-cars and even ice-cream were a few of the reminders of civilization we received here. "Good Conduct Passes" were also issued to those of us who were "good." These entitled us to visit the villages of Borneau, Isaac, St. Medard, Martignas and St. Jean-d'Illac, when not on duty. By far the most popular of these villages was St. Medard, where most of us spent our Sundays. This was a small market town with a lot of booths set up, in which merchandise was sold. The houses were ancient and the village made a very pretty sight. The town was usually the scene of much activity. Japs, coolies and American and French soldiers filled the streets, as well as visitors from neighboring villages, who were arriving, dressed in their Sunday best, in their high, two-wheeled carts. In the village square, a band of gypsies had settled and were selling horses, pigs and cows. Around the square, picnic parties were usually formed, and families and couples were seated in the grass with their luncheon spread out. Meals were usually served to the men at the many inns, in and about the town, and were very satisfactory, excepting that bread and sugar were entirely lacking. Every restaurant had the sign "No bread" posted. Cigarettes were also not procurable anywhere. Fruit and vegetables, however, were in great abundance, at reasonable prices.

In the meantime, our schooling in the science of warfare was progressing very rapidly. We started going out to different observation posts at the large range nearby, from which we fired. The officers were given problems at the observation posts and sent their commands down by telephone to the guns. When the commands were executed and the guns were fired, the officers observed the fire through glasses, made corrections and finally adjusted on their targets. The cannoneers worked on the guns, the telephone men on the wires and the officers in directing fire. We were thus receiving the training which made us later so well organized and co-ordinated a unit.

As our experience increased, we started firing practice barrages. We camped out in our shelter tents at the range, and turned in, leaving guards posted who were to observe for barrage rockets. Several times during these nights, the signals came, and we were routed out of our blankets to put over a "deadly barrage."

Gas masks arrived and Harknett was made "Gas Sergeant." The steel helmets were also issued and we started having gas-mask drill. George trained us to do the stunt in six seconds, even though he made a pest of himself in doing it. No matter where we were, we could not escape his ghostly and



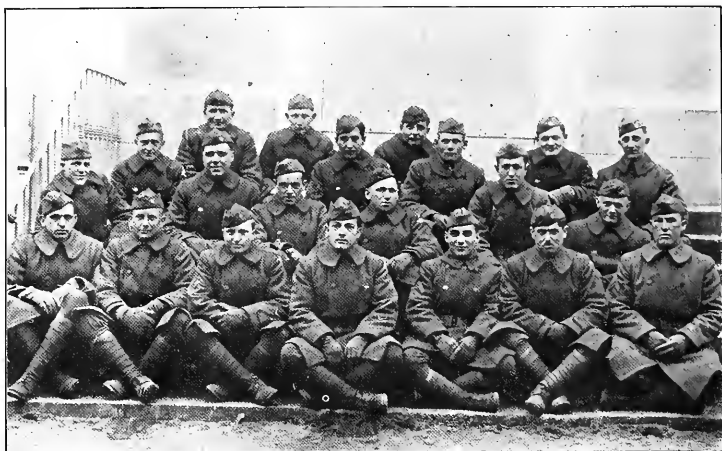


*Drivers Group.*

highly realistic yell "Gas!" and we had to drop everything and put on our gas masks, which we were now required to wear at all formations.

The horses also arrived, and now developed our love for these "dogs" of war. They kicked us, bit us and trampled us under foot, while we learned to treat them "as we would our children." The task of grooming, feeding and watering them was an ever-present horror, and lucky was he who could successfully "duck" a formation and "get away with it." The farmers, of course, didn't mind them, but the "pen pushers" from the city were not accustomed to the "dogs" and their treatment as yet, and they longed for the 4.7's and the much heard of tractors. With the horses started the equitation instruction under Lieutenant Richard and Lieutenant Lunny. Lieutenant Richard gathered a group of inexperienced N. C. O.'s around him and started to tell them how a horse was to be properly ridden. He attempted to give a practical demonstration, but the horse evidently had not been accustomed to the most approved methods of riding, as taught in Plattsburgh, with the result that the Lieutenant gracefully though forcibly was seated on the ground as the animal vanished from under him like a streak of wind. Many of the N. C. O.'s, profiting by this instruction, succeeded in imitating the Lieutenant to perfection, and Corporal Miller, Corporal Freedman and Sergeant Clackner were especially expert in this direction. Sergeant Ruggiero discovered a new means of mounting a horse—by climbing up one of his hind legs and hoisting himself up by his tail. All of the horses didn't stand for this, however, and "Ruggy" also "bit the dust" very often.

On July 2nd we took our first long road march. We rose at 5 A. M. and left camp in complete mounted formation, for a field problem. We were in the saddle all morning, and up to about 2 P. M., when a stop was had for



*Telephone, Observing and Machine Gun Details.*

mess, which was prepared and served from the rolling kitchen. At this stop the horses were watered. After mess, the march was continued, and at a certain point in the road, the order to go into position and fire was given. Communication was quickly established, and firing commenced, under the observation of General Rees. The firing ceased at about 6 P. M., and mess was again served on the road. We then started on the return march, reaching the barracks at about 10:30.

The following morning, we learned that we would parade in Bordeaux on July 4th, and preparations immediately commenced. Spurs were issued to all of the drivers and troopers. After dinner, we left camp on the way to Bordeaux. Everybody wore their best "duds" and felt in excellent spirits. At about six o'clock, Le Bouscat was reached, where we pitched camp. This was a very beautiful spot, formerly a fashionable race track, and was marked "Pelouse." The picket line was established, horses groomed and mess served, and then the men lounged around taking life easy. French peasants from the adjoining country visited the camp in the evening. The band played selections from the grandstand, and the holiday spirit prevailed.

On July 4th, we arose bright and early, and immediately watered the horses. We left our camp at eight o'clock for Bordeaux. As we rode through the streets, we drew forth much applause from the crowds. The reviewing stand was at Rue de la Tournay, and as the battery passed by there were many cries of "Joli" and "Vive l'Amerique." The band played and the moving picture machines were busy. The horses behaved excellently, and the conduct of the battery was praiseworthy. The city was decorated lavishly with French and American flags and bunting, and all business places were closed. After passing the reviewing stand, we returned by the same route to the camping

place. Passes were issued to us, and most of us went back to Bordeaux and enjoyed a good meal and some "vin rouge" there.

The next day, we were back at Songe, and except for a large forest fire which we had much trouble in extinguishing, nothing of interest occurred until July 9th, when we learned that we would leave Camp and entrain for parts unknown. Details for the entire trip were made up and announced. The bedsacks were emptied, the bunks taken down, and the barracks thoroughly cleaned. In the morning the entire battery went to the Gas House, where they were put through "tear gas." There were no killed or wounded, nevertheless, many of us returned in tears. A collection was made for luxuries for the trip, to break the monotony of canned corned beef and similar delicacies, and seven hundred francs were collected.

At about six o'clock the entire battery, except for details remaining behind to police up the barracks, marched to the railroad station at Bonneau. The work of loading up the cars was immediately commenced. Some difficulty was had in loading the horses on the box cars, but this was finally accomplished by the Herculean efforts of French, Pons, Von Pless and Schwab. Eight horses were put in each car, four on each side, head to head with each other, and two men in the center. All of the battery equipment, including wagons, limbers, caissons and pieces were loaded on flat cars.

The box cars for the men were similar to those we had had on the trip from Brest, but were much more comfortable, because only twenty-two were assigned to a car, instead of forty-one, as on that trip. The seats were taken down, and bedsacks which some of the men had brought with them, were spread over the floors, making a soft bedding. The loading lasted until about midnight, at which hour a light luncheon consisting of a cup of coffee, matzoth and molasses syrup was served. We were assigned to our cars for the trip, and turned in about one o'clock.

## Chapter IV.

### AT THE FRONT—THE BACCARAT SECTOR.

*July 10, 1918, to July 31, 1918.*



EARLY in the morning of July 10th, the train pulled out of the station at Bonneau. This departure marked a very definite phase in our adventures and we all felt that here was the end of one of the stages of our experiences, and the beginning of a new and much more serious one. From now on, it was a question of passing from hardships to ever greater hardships, and it was with a feeling of regret that we left the environs of Souge. In spite of diarrhoea and sand, it had been a pleasant place. Y. M. C. A.'s, "vin rouge," the close proximity of Bordeaux and St. Medard, had rendered the place bearable, even to those who did not appreciate the beauties of the surrounding pine woods. On the other hand, the "wanderlust" of the men, the variety and novelty of travelling, the break in the monotony of training camp existence, and the curiosity as to "What's next?" counterbalanced these regrets to a certain extent, and in many cases made the departure desired.

After much dilly-dallying, Bordeaux was reached at 9 A. M., and we were allowed to go into the station and wash. The train started shortly afterward, and except for occasional stops, maintained a regular speed during the day. The country passed through was most beautiful, even more so than the country between Brest and Bordeaux. Lombardy poplars adorned the landscape everywhere. Grass-covered hills and valleys afforded, a very pleasing panoramic view to our eyes as we sat on the floors of our "Pullmans" near the doors. Every bit of land was carefully and neatly cultivated, a fact which was hardly understandable, in view of the absence of the men. Women were seen at work occasionally and the train even had a woman "switchlady" dressed in a neat suit of black. Many American camps were seen en route, and the entire country showed signs of Americanization. At mess, which was served from the moving kitchen on one of the cars, cigarettes, candy, chocolate, raisins, oranges and nuts were served, being purchased by the contribution of the men. At night, we squatted on the floors near the doors of our cars and sang such songs as "Tenting to-night," "Indiana," and other sentimental tunes, until we, one by one, fell off to sleep in our corners.

We continued this trip through the entire next day and night, and it was not until the morning following that we saw the first signs of warfare. At Blainville, where quite a large number of French soldiers in trench equipment



*Battery culinary establishment.*

were observed, we saw the first placard "Abri de Bombardment." Several houses showed signs of bombardment and everywhere indications of the close proximity of the front were apparent. After we reached Luneville, shell-torn houses could be seen all along the route. We finally reached Baccarat and unloaded. Everywhere was hustle and bustle, and no time was even had to serve mess. The horses presented a very sorry appearance, with bruises all over them, and manes and tails all tangled up and dirty. Soon afterward we started off to the echelon, about three kilometers away. An interval of one hundred yards was maintained between each of the pieces, so that the battery would not present too large a target to enemy aeroplanes. The horses were also marched up at intervals. Instructions were given to everyone to be on the lookout for aeroplanes, and to stop immediately if any were seen. We reached the echelon at about 4:30. It was located in the midst of woods on a hillside, and gave a very excellent view of the beautiful surrounding country. A picket line was immediately stretched, and the horses were groomed and fed. We then pitched our tents and ate a scant mess. Mail was distributed and was greatly appreciated, for in most cases it contained words of good cheer and acted as a tonic to us in our strange surroundings.

The announcement was then made that a large part of the battery would leave for the front that night, and preparations immediately commenced. Revolvers and ammunition were distributed to all of those who were leaving. Canvas leggings were removed and spirals put on in their place, as only the latter were allowed to be worn at the front. Darkness came on soon, and in the dark we saddled our horses and adjusted the gas masks on them. We wore our steel helmets and belts, and as we passed each other in this garb, with our revolvers sticking out of our hip-pockets, we presented strange figures.

Jam sandwiches were served to those leaving, and then Capt. Mahon addressed a few words to us, cautioning and advising us as to the night's adventures.

About midnight, the order "Forward, Ho!" was given and the battery moved out. The Captain rode at the head, followed by the B. C. Detail in a column of two's. The horses were very impatient and unruly, no doubt, because of their long trip on the box cars, and because of the unaccustomed gas masks on their noses. The sky was overcast, and everything was enshrouded in pitch darkness. As we moved along, no sounds could be heard except the clatter of the horses' hoofs, the muffled tones of the men, the occasional rumbling of a cart passing by, and the distant booming of guns. Now and then, flares lit up the sky, and signal rockets rose here and there. As the procession neared certain points, the dark figure of a sentry would come into view, and the procession would be halted until the countersign was given. We passed through a village which had recently been shelled and looked with interest at the dark, almost ghastly outlines of the houses, with their tumbling walls and the shell-holes through their roofs. At another village, the few houses had their blinds mysteriously drawn, and behind the blinds could be seen bright lights. Two mysterious figures came out, and after a talk with the Battery Commander, went on ahead, while the column was halted. They soon returned, and then the battery moved onward. About 3 A. M. a turn in the road was reached, and we went into our first gun position. It was day-break before our work was done, and then we went into the dugouts and tumbled off to sleep, clothes and all, as best we could in the limited space. Frenchmen were still occupying the position, so our quarters were very cramped.

We slept most of the day, and it was almost evening before we arose and looked over our new home. It was an excellent position on the side of a hill, and was very well camouflaged. The dugouts and bomb-proof shelters were not yet completed, but work was well under way. The surrounding country was very beautiful, and a few hours out of doors here would compensate for the many hours which would have to be spent underground.

The next day was Sunday, July 14th, the French national holiday; yet it neither felt like Sunday nor a holiday to us. We continued the digging in the dug-outs and bomb-proof shelters all day, and walked around all besmeared and dirty from the clay earth. The Frenchmen, however, were all cleaned up and in holiday attire, and between "vin rouge" and other beverages, they had a merry time of it. As best they could, they expressed their kindly sympathy and love for their "Camarades Americains," as they termed us, and drank to the health of the American and French Republics—"a la santé des Républiques Française et Américaine." The names of Lafayette and Franklin were often mentioned, and on the whole, the finest spirit of friendship prevailed.

In the afternoon we fired a few rounds to "adjust" the guns. There was great aeroplane activity in the sky, and more than once were the machine guns trained against enemy aircraft. Half of the battery spent the nights in the dugouts, while the other half slept under the shelter of a cowshed or stable nearby, at the "barracks." Rats were very numerous here, and climbed all over us, and many of us awoke to find several of the rodents playing tag on

our chests. A few "Allez's" helped to chase them away for the time, they being French rats, but they returned all too soon.

On the 19th, the French left the position, leaving the emplacement in our entire charge. Life had already settled down to a dull routine, and for the next few days we did nothing but dig, dig and dig. When the news reached us on the 31st that we were to move out that night, we greeted it with joy, even though we did not know where our next stop would be.

The line from the Champagne plains to the Swiss border was at this time made up entirely of "quiet sectors." It scarcely seemed to be the "Front" at all. Farther up the line the terrible counter-offensive had started and both sides were using up every shell and every ounce of strength in that decisive conflict. Life had been dull at Vaxainville, but we had kept busy and had put into practice many of the things we had been taught at Souge.

## Chapter V.

### VAXAINVILLE TO THE NESLE WOODS.

*July 31, 1918, to August 12, 1918.*



It was midnight when we left Vaxainville. A clear crescent moon lit up the sky and helped to make the early part of the hike enjoyable. The many villages through which we passed had been heavily shelled and the indistinct outlines of their ruins presented a spectral appearance in the moonlight. We continued hiking all night with but little rest, and the morning saw us fatigued and wearied; but, in spite of our weariness, we were very much interested in the sights as the day broke and made them visible. In the early morning we arrived at a strip of woods where we joined the rest of the battery which had proceeded separately from the echelon. We were almost famished and the meagre breakfast, consisting of one slice of bread and bacon, did little towards satisfying our hunger. After the horses were taken care of and all other details provided for, we were able to get about two hours' sleep in the rain.

At about ten o'clock of that night, our journey was resumed under conditions similar to those of the preceding night. Many villages were passed on the march. The men were on the verge of exhaustion and kept on marching ahead in a lifeless mechanical way. The woods and the outlines of trees and bushes took on strange and fantastic shapes as we passed by them with eyes almost closed. After another all-night hike, we arrived at a strip of woods, outside of the village of Virecourt, near Bayon. Camp was pitched in a grassy clearing and the men enjoyed a few hours' sleep during the day before retiring for the night.

The following morning the battery was assembled and informed by Sergeant French that the Captain was very much pleased with the manner in which the men had endured the hardships of the march. He gave the further information that we would be encamped here for several days, and that no gas masks, side-arms or steel helmets would have to be worn. There was a general feeling of relief when this news was heard, as it seemed to indicate a step away from the actual fighting front. Many rumors were current as to our destination, and it was generally believed that we were going to Italy. Galiano Anselmi, Antola, Monaco, Procopio, and several other of our Italian comrades were overjoyed at the thought and immediately made mental pictures of their popularity with the fair sex of Italy, when they should arrive sporting their graceful, soldierly forms in the American uniform. In the evening they started a rehearsal of Italian songs. Music



filled the air until the source of these sweet sounds was discovered, and then tin cans, bottles, shoes and other such bouquets of appreciation filled the air. The vocalists did not "encore." Galiano was very much incensed at Curran, "Paddy" Bowler and several other sons of Ireland who helped to break up his party. "Manage marrone" and other of his favorite cuss words were hurled at them, but succeeded only in drawing forth the contemptuous rejoinder from "Paddy" that "Thim hathen wops didn't know nuthin about music; if they would only sing 'Erin go Bragh' or some other civilized tune instid of thot Dago lingo we all might jine the karus."

We spent the next two days in this camp, and enjoyed every minute of this short stay. The men bathed in the clear, pebble-bottomed Moselle River and felt much refreshed. In the evenings, passes were issued to Virecourt and Bayon, where ice-cream and beer were purchased and were partaken of by all who could get there before the limited supply was sold out. The M. P.'s had a hard time getting Nilan and Gleason away from the ice-cream counter and "Barney" Lowell and "Hank" Miller from the beer counter.

In the morning of August 7, the shrill and unwelcome whistle of the First Sergeant blew at 4:15. The tents, wet from the rain which had been falling during the night, were immediately struck and packs were rolled. At 7:30 we moved out, and marched with very heavy packs up a succession of steep hills for a long distance until we reached Einvaux, where the familiar French box cars were awaiting us. These were immediately loaded up, and in the early afternoon, we pulled out of the station. Many other troop trains passed us. We received an excellent reception everywhere and everybody was in fine spirits. Every box-car door was open and the men sang their favorite tunes as they sat grouped around the doorways viewing the scenery. All lights were ordered out after dark, and the machine-gun guards were posted on the flat-cars in case of an avion attack.

The ride was continued all night and until noon of the next day, when we detrained at Conlounniers. This was a lively place for a French town, and there was quite a bit of activity on the streets. As we marched through, loaded down with our heavy packs, the civilian inhabitants curiously looked us over.

Conlounniers had been one of the points of the farthest advance made by the Boche in 1914. It was, however, fairly well intact, with the exception of the electric power-house just opposite from the siding where we detrained. This building had been levelled by hostile aviators just a couple of weeks before in the grand but futile Boche smash of July 15. We all felt thrilled at our arrival in this part of France, for it was within easy striking distance of Chateau-Thierry—a name which even at that early date had begun to grip the imagination of the A. E. F. We had heard or read in the papers only scattering accounts of the glorious Franco-American counter-attack of July 18, but we realized that the part of the line we were headed for had been the crux of the fiercest struggle in the war and was the most active part of the line at this time.

We hiked two kilometers and reached St. Denis. This was a small, clean, picturesque village, perched on the top of a hill, overlooking the neighboring country. Its red-roofed huts were grouped around the village church. The village folk were in the square, lined up in their Sunday best, and gave

us a very glad reception as we marched in. The kitchen was established at a central point and supper prepared and served. After mess the battery assembled near the church and were led off in groups to their respective billets which consisted of bunks in old barns and deserted houses.

In the evening of the next day the battery was assembled in front of the church and given the previous month's pay. Many lively groups gathered around the village and visited the "Epicerie," where, under the stimulating effects of "vin rouge" and other beverages, many a knotty problem of military strategy and tactics was "doped out."

We left St. Denis at 5:30 the following evening, carrying our full rolls and packs, and marched very hurriedly for nearly three hours, and then halted for mess. The halt was of such short duration, however, that very few could finish their meal, and when the order to resume march came, we had to run along behind the carriages with hardtack in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other, trying to eat, to the amusement of the village inhabitants. The march, continued all night, brought us into the wooded slopes of the Marne Valley. We became so fatigued, that when a halt was ordered, we dropped into the nearest spot, no matter where. The grass became wet with dew, and the air chill. Our clothes were still wet with perspiration from the heat of the day, and when we dropped into the wet grass and the chill air reached our bodies, we became uncomfortably cold.

During the few short rests, the order came down from the head of the column: "Cannoneers, pull grass to feed the horses!" "Uncle Henry" tried this with the team nearest him, and fed them plenteously with clover. When the order "Forward Ho!" was given, the "dogs" started forward at a great pace, evidently refreshed by the grass, and "Hank" had all he could do to keep up with them. Much incensed, "Hank" tried to argue with the beasts, but they wouldn't listen to reason. At the next halt, Henry had some new thoughts on the subject, and the horses received no more encouragement.

At 5 A. M., very weary in body and spirit, we pulled into a stretch of woods overlooking the River Marne, and dropped off for a few hours' sleep. During the day, many men bathed in the stream, trying to get some relief for their blistered feet. The medical men gave us some attention, but what we needed most was rest; and that was not to be had. At 6:30 P. M., we again started hiking over very rough roads. We passed over a long pontoon bridge, crossing the Marne at Chateau-Thierry, where we hiked through a large, wide avenue, lined with trees. The dust, dirt and debris of bombarded buildings were on all sides, and the whole town seemed to be shattered. No lights were apparent anywhere. No persons were to be seen in the streets except the dusky figure of a sentinel, here and there. We hiked through in a great hurry and halted at dawn in the Bois de Fere. As we were fast approaching the front once more, it was essential to clear the roads before break of day to avoid the eye of enemy aviators. We had much difficulty here in finding clean patches of ground on which to pitch our tents. The woods had recently been a camping ground occupied by the Germans, and the ground was strewn over with their equipment and other traces of their habitation. Nearby, the unburied body of a French soldier reminded us that we were fast approaching the real horrors of warfare.



*Corner in Chateau Thicvery rounded by 304  
F. A. about 10 P. M. in August, 1918. Harknett  
and Miller several months later at same spot  
on their "photo" tour of the front.*

After a day spent in trying to remedy the condition of our feet, and in snatching some sleep whenever possible, we started out in the evening again on a hike which, for hardship, outrivaled any which we had up to this time taken. The roads were full of ruts and shell holes, with loose rocks and stones scattered over them, and as we plodded along in the dark, we would stumble over these, and have the greatest difficulty in recovering ourselves, laden down with our heavy packs. Throughout the night, the disgusting and sickening stench from unburied dead horses reached us, and were more disagreeable than the physical hardships of hiking. The roads were very congested, both with carriages and soldiers. Long files of infantrymen, returning from the front, passed us. These troops were of the Fourth U. S. Division, which our infantry had already relieved, and we therefore were very anxious to hear something of the front towards which we were speeding. Little satisfaction did we derive from our queries—some such rejoinders as "You'll learn all about it when you get there," or "It's hell, alright," and "The Boche may be running but they are still kicking hard," were neither reassuring nor satisfying. At a halt, one of us lit a cigarette. "Put out that light, you — fool! After you've had a few bombs drop on your dome, you'll have more sense than that," came from one of the returning veterans of the line.

All the while the constant flashing of distant guns lit up the night sky and as the march progressed, the booming of cannons sounded louder in the still night air. Hell was loose and we were headed for it as fast as our weary limbs could bring us. At the halts the men were unusually quiet that night—a combination of exhaustion and a feeling of suspense over the prospect of coming events.

The strain of our rapid march was beginning to tell not alone on the men but also on the horses with their heavy loads. At that time the battery still boasted of eight powerful-looking stallions which were distributed in pairs to the G. S. wagons, loaded with 75 mm. shells, and driven by such



*Old Battery D echelon in Nesle Woods,  
Vesle sector.*

expert horsemen as Brotz, Lendzun, Van Anken and Kvalheim. The most powerful pair of the lot was Lendzun's, but their past condition of servitude had not trained them to haul heavy loads of ammunition, and on this march they began to crack under the strain. One of them fell in the traces and in spite of continued urging from Lendzun, ably assisted by Lieutenant Tweedy, he could not regain his feet until the veterinarian came along with an injection of strychnine. Under the influence of a potent dose, the old fellow got to his feet and resumed marching, only to stumble into a deep shell-hole when we reached our destination that night. Even the customary skill in such matters of Sergeant French and Sergeant Pons failed in this emergency and the big black died of his exertions to extricate himself. The shell-hole became his grave and thus saved the "Dead Horse Brigade" next morning from an unpleasant detail.

In the course of that evening's hike, we passed through the ruins of Sergy and across the Ourcq River, both places made famous a scant two weeks before by American divisions. At last, after passing over roads and through woods that seemed endless, we encamped in the Nesle Woods at about 2:30 A. M. The picket line was stretched, the horses fed, and the carriages camouflaged, and then we all turned in entirely exhausted. The woods were very sweet-smelling and refreshing, after the vile odors of death and decay through which we had just been passing. We had been informed that this was the end of our hike, as the front lines were but five miles ahead, and under these pleasing conditions, we were all soon stretched out in sleep on the grass and moss under the large trees.

## Chapter VI.

### THE VESLE SECTOR.

*August 15, 1918, to September 4, 1918.*



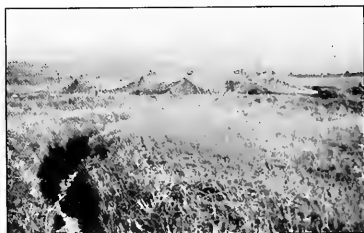
NE of the remarkable facts in connection with a soldier's life is the power of recuperation he develops. Time and time again we have thought ourselves on the verge of exhaustion, and expending our last ounce of effort, yet, after a short period of rest, we have come back with a greater spirit of energy and push than we started with. And very pleasing have these short periods of rest been. Like the convalescent, we have enjoyed the beauties and joys of life all the more for having been deprived of them. In the relaxation of these short periods, we have learned to enjoy the present instead of looking ahead toward the future. The three days we spent in these woods were one of these short periods of rest and recuperation, and were highly enjoyed by all of us. We wandered about and explored the woods searching for souvenirs which the retreating Germans might have left behind. We forgot the war for the time, and in true boyish spirit, found everything full of interest.

Probably nothing else had been so vividly and persistently impressed upon our minds during our training at Camp de Souge as the dangers of poisonous gases. It seemed that the Boche possessed an infinite variety of ways of torturing their enemies with these deadly fumes. When we reached our first active front, we were therefore inclined to expect gas from every mysterious source. That wicked sorcerer, "Gas Sergeant" Harknett, encouraged us in this belief, so that we would be more docile and obedient to his precautionary regulations, and also to put a little "pep" into the incessant gas-mask drills. A strong gas guard was posted each evening in the Nesle Woods, armed to the teeth with sirens and horns. The night we pulled into that camp, everyone was too tired to worry about gas, but the following evening we were all on the alert for it.

Under cover of darkness all the horses in the Regiment were taken out to graze in a neighboring field. At about nine o'clock our ears caught the gruesome sound of Boche bombing planes approaching. We were cautioned to stand by the horses and remain motionless. Our hearts jumped into our throats as one of the planes descended very low and commenced to circle around just over our head. Suddenly the sky was lit up by a vivid flare dropped by the aviator, which also gave out rather dense fumes. Every sentinel in the vicinity at once suspected that this was the latest Boche trick in gas warfare, and the sirens uttered their warning wails throughout the woods.



*First gun position, Vesle Sector, looking south-east to left of Chery Chartreuve.*



*Trench leading from road to first gun position, Vesle Sector, Chery Chartreuve in background.*

Fifteen hundred men commenced frantic efforts to beat the six-second allowance to adjust their masks. Some of the drivers in their devotion to the "dogs" started to put the horse masks on first, but as the dumb brutes did not appreciate their gallantry and struggled against it, the drivers reconsidered and adopted the "Sauve qui peut" attitude. Many of the horses taking fright at the uncanny sight of their masked keepers, bolted. It took a half hour to corral them again. Meanwhile, a figure graced by a Sam Browne belt was seen dashing madly in the direction of camp, calling repeatedly, "Where is E Battery?" It was Captain Perin, who had come out for his evening stroll minus his gas mask. Contrary to expectations, the Boche avion dropped no further missiles and soon disappeared, leaving us to a hearty laugh over our first gas scare. This experience, however, keyed up the gas guards more than ever, with the result that for two nights we had no less than a dozen imaginary additional attacks. Our sleep was so frequently disturbed that most of us finally paid no attention to the sirens. Major Sanders was appointed Gas Marshal, with authority to arrest anyone giving a false alarm, and gradually the guards learned to differentiate between real and false attacks.

Our sojourn in the Bois de Nesle came to an end all too soon. At ten o'clock in the night of August 15, the first two pieces, Sergeant Ruggiero's and Sergeant Velle's sections, with approximately thirty-five men, left for the front, and here started our real war experiences. Many times on the road we heard the shrill, unearthly wail of the siren, warning us that enemy gas-shells were near, and causing us to put on our gas-masks. These were as necessary for the nauseating stench of dead and decaying horses as they were for gas itself. Added to these horrors of sound and smell, was a wild confusion of traffic all along the route, and especially at crossroads. Every carriage was in mad haste, but no one seemed to know where he was going. The shouts and curses of drivers, the rattling of the carriages, and the stamping of the horses added to the tumult and confusion. Here, indeed, was a contrast to the quiet and sweet-smelling woods which we had just left.

After we left the main road, we turned into a wooded lane and slowly and cautiously made our way with enemy shells shrieking and bursting all around us, and with our own guns booming and banging away, to our first position, near Chery-Chartreuve. Here, midst the wildest confusion of sound—a nerve racking medley of gas sirens, whistling and bursting of shells, and ceaseless

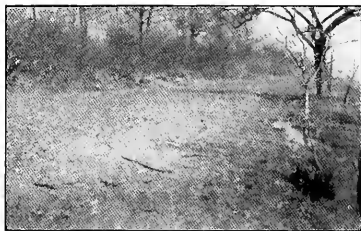


*Battery D "for holes" on road in front of first position at Veste front.*

firing of our own guns—we unloaded the wagons and put the two guns into position. We immediately took part in a barrage which was being fired. Unacquainted as we were with the lay of the land and the conditions about us, we were dazed by all of this activity. Before we noticed it, the night was gone, and as day broke we could better see our surroundings.

Our gun emplacement was in the middle of an open field, and the only concealment it had was a net of camouflage. Running from the road, which was a short distance away, in front of the guns, was a winding trench which led to the gun position. Adjoining the road was a block of woods, and under cover of the trees numerous fox-holes had been dug where some of our men who were not at the gun position took shelter. This strip of woods was on ground about two feet above the road and, in the bank caused by this elevation, numerous other holes had been burrowed, for the banks gave additional protection.

That night, our two other guns, Sergeant Mayer's and Sergeant Grandin's sections, came up and we took over the entire position. The men scoured their shelters as best they could, and work was done in improving the emplacement. During the day, enemy aeroplanes were very active, and little firing could be done by us without being observed. The enemy was not very active in his firing until the afternoon of August 18, when he opened up on our position and forced us to take shelter in the dugouts alongside of the road. The two days following, he continued his activity, sending over many gas, shrapnel and high-explosive shells, and directing fire with his aeroplanes. Time and again we were forced to abandon the emplacement and take shelter in our holes. Gas masks were almost continuously worn, and if "Canal boat" Harknett was busy supervising the engineering work of constructing latrines at our later positions, he certainly was active yelling "Gas!" here. Enemy aero-



*Road above the first gun position on the Vesle front.*



*Ferme des Dames—P. C. of the 306th Infantry near first gun position, Vesle sector.*

planes were continuously above us, while our own were as scarce as the hairs on "Uncle Henry's" head. Occasionally a plane bearing the "Allied" mark appeared, but acted so suspiciously that we all suspected that it was a German plane masquerading under our colors.

All of this enemy activity came to a climax on August 21. About one o'clock in the morning, a very heavy shelling of the road in front of the position commenced. Every man was in the greatest danger as shell after shell exploded within a few yards of him. We crouched in the holes in the bank adjoining the road, with our gas masks on, and our uncomfortable positions made breathing exceedingly difficult. As the shells exploded nearby, they threw up a shower of dirt and rocks in all directions. This shelling continued for a half hour and was renewed from time to time, but with less effect. About three o'clock in the afternoon an "Allied" plane appeared and circled suspiciously over the emplacement. A few minutes later, fire was opened up on us and shell after shell hit the road, while others went through the camouflage covering the emplacement. Captain Mahon ordered that the position be abandoned, and everybody ran, taking the best shelter he could find. Almost everyone of us had been caught by the enemy gas shells, causing a burning and irritating sensation in our eyes, noses and throats. We hurriedly adjusted our gas masks as we ran, but the stifling and suffocating sensation in our throats made breathing impossible, so that despite the gas, we removed masks and ran without them. For the next half hour, we crouched under trees and in holes, while the steady and even buzz of the aeroplane was heard above in marked contrast to the irregular thumping of our hearts. Gradually the shelling died down, and as darkness came on, we gathered one by one at the kitchen in the woods where hot coffee was served to us. Several men were slightly gassed and had to return to the echelon that night. "Moe" Weissberger was among those gassed, and no doubt it was here that he earned one of the three citations for gallantry which the New York newspapers mentioned.

After supper we returned to the gun position, where word soon came down that we were going to fire two hundred and eighty gas-shells that night, in retaliation for the gassing we had received. A detail of men arrived from the echelon to carry ammunition to the guns. After the thrilling events of the day, a great nervous strain was felt everywhere. The detail worked hur-



riedly, carrying the gas-shells from the road, down the winding trench to the guns. Everyone was in suspense, for it was feared that the enemy would open up on us again before we could commence firing. At last all preparations were completed and "Bang!" went the first shell, with an angry roar. All the guns were soon in full swing, and shell after shell sailed through the air towards the enemy. The cannoneers worked with a vim and sent greetings and blessings for the Boche along with every projectile. For the first time their blood was really up. The Hun had made an effort, almost successful, to get their lives by this very means, and now he was getting a dose of his own medicine. Each shell we sent over seemed to be an answer to one which we had received.

After the firing was completed, the guns were hurriedly drawn out to nearby woods, and dummy guns, made of wood, were set up under the camouflage. We were all totally exhausted and worn out from the strain of the past few days. Though the firing had ceased, the din was still ringing in our ears. We were all in a sort of stupor. There had been one continuous round of excitement for the past twenty-four hours and now it all seemed so unreal. The emplacement was entirely abandoned and the men gathered one by one under the cover of the woods adjoining the road. The new day was breaking in the East, and slowly the sun rose over the nearby hills. After this night of mad din and nervous excitement, it seemed as though we were emerging from a horrible nightmare into beautiful, peaceful sunshine.

We were able to sleep most of the day for the enemy seemed to have been quieted by our fire. The following day, however, we were disillusioned, for the shells started coming over as fast as ever. The Germans seemed to have discovered our messing schedule, for whenever we prepared to have a meal, they scattered us. The Captain had his own difficulties in this direction. Monaco, his orderly, could not be found. Finally, at the end of the day, after the Captain had had to serve himself all day, Monaco slowly and cautiously emerged from his dugout. He was hailed before the Captain, who asked him if he wanted to see him die of starvation. "What's a matter, Capitaine? You no hear the shelling?" asked Monaco. "Of course I heard it; of course I heard it," answered the Captain. "What about it? What about it?" "Well, Capitaine, you wanta Monaco die?" There was no answering this conclusive argument, so the Captain had to continue getting his meals as best he could.

In the afternoon of that day, August 23, we suffered our first losses. An ammunition detail was carrying shells from the woods to the gun position, when a heavy hostile shelling commenced. Vannini, Bryant and Kalf took shelter behind an old aeroplane nearby. A shell struck the gasoline tank and caused a tremendous explosion. Vannini and Bryant were terribly burned as well as torn by shell splinters and both died at the first-aid station. Kalf, badly burned and wounded, was taken to the hospital, where he died a few days later. The news of these casualties had a very depressing effect. Warfare had a new meaning for us all. A burying detail dug two graves, side by side, about one hundred meters from the Farm des Dames. Wrapped up in their blankets, our dead comrades were laid at rest. Two rude wooden crosses marked their simple burial places.



*Acroplane near battery position near Chery Chartreux under which Bryant, Kalf and Vannini were mortally wounded.*

The first casualties were always the most vivid reminders of war's stern realities. Now we were ready for anything. The enemy continued his activities for the next week, but we now regarded it as part of our daily life, and only the very unusual would disturb us. In addition, we all felt secure in the knowledge that prayers were being offered up daily for us. There was "Paddy" Curran, usually under the shelter of the largest tree in the vicinity, with a little prayer-book in his hand, beseeching the good Lord to "bless us all." The Lord, however, whether he was blessing us or not, didn't seem to be very much interested in filling up the water wagon, nor was "Paddy," so it usually remained empty. This has been ascribed to the fact that "Paddy" didn't like water as a thirst quencher.

During this entire period, our echelon had been maintained in the Nestle Woods. Every night, ammunition and food supplies were brought up by the drivers, under the able charge of Sergeants French, Von Pless and "Pop" Munday, and Corporals McDonough and Schwab. This was no easy task, for the roads were almost constantly under shell fire, and the way had to be carefully picked; and much credit was due to all these men for their aid in this important work. Special details, such as digging details, usually accompanied the wagons when they came up, and one night, as a member of such a detail, Joe Hornung appeared. The enemy sent over a few shells to greet him, and Joe ducked for the nearest hole. His head came in forcible contact with the corner of the hole and he was "knocked out" for the rest of the war. In this heroic manner, he also earned a wound stripe. Joe has since been making a special study of the hospital system of the American Army, and seems to have found it very satisfactory, for he has spent most of his time in the hospitals.



*Old Battery B position on Vesle—used later by Battery D detached piece where Sgt. Weinbauer was mortally wounded.*



*New Cemetery near Chery Chartreuse—in which the graves of many 304 F. A. men have been transferred.*

It was just about this time that Lieutenant Tweedy was taken from the battery for assignment with Battery F. During his first day of duty with them, the gun position was heavily shelled during a period of firing. One gun-crew was nearly wiped out and Lieutenant Tweedy was seriously wounded.

On September 3rd, the enemy commenced a very intense artillery fire. Three of our pieces had been removed from the original location to a position inside of the woods. The other piece under Sergeant George Weinbauer was placed in an abandoned gun position, from which Battery B had been shelled out a week before. The shells started landing very close to Weinbauer's piece, and he, with splendid presence of mind, immediately ordered his crew to leave the emplacement. He gallantly remained behind to unfuse some shells which otherwise would have been a source of danger, and was caught by the enemy fire. Several large shell fragments struck him and fatally wounded him. An ambulance was summoned and carried him to the hospital. As a result of these wounds, he died there, September 6th, sincerely mourned by his comrades. In a short time he had risen from a Private to a Sergeant and was one of the most popular non-commissioned officers in the battery. Even the "buck" privates agreed that though he was a Sergeant, he was a "regular fellow." His brave action was commemorated shortly afterward in General Orders.

The next day, the reason for the heavy shelling became apparent. The observers reported that the Boche were in retreat, and as was his usual custom, he had shot up all of his reserve ammunition instead of leaving it behind. We made up our rolls and packs and were prepared to start as soon as the order to advance came. It arrived in the late afternoon. The horses and limbers were brought up from the echelon, and as soon as darkness came on, we pulled out of our position in high spirits, and started on our first advance.



*Vesle Valley showing Bazoches in background.*

## Chapter VII.

### ADVANCING TO THE AISNE RIVER.

*September 4, 1918, to September 14, 1918.*



It has often been represented that the first sight of the gory horrors of a battlefield has filled the soldier with such a horror and disgust that it has turned him sick and affected him mentally for the rest of his life. As we crossed the Vesle River, on the morning of September 5, after a night of hard hiking, and, in the light of the breaking day, saw stretched out on both sides of the road, many corpses of both Germans and Americans, no such distressing effect was noticeable to us. Perhaps the rapid succession of events and impressions which had been crowded into our lives for the past month had rendered us callous to new emotions; or the idea of death had no horrors for those whose business it was to inflict death. So we marched by these many corpses, stretched out stark in the final postures which they had taken in their attempts to ward off death, and viewed their faces, already black with corruption, with astonishing lack of concern. Many men, who in civil life would have grown faint at the sight of blood, now looked upon the bloody horrors of recent violent death unaffected, to their own surprise.

The roads we were marching over had been completely shattered by our own artillery fire. For the first time we saw, close at hand, the results of our own work, and there was no doubt that it had been very effective. Almost all of the giant poplar trees, lining the Rouen-Rheims highroad, had had the upper half of the trunk blasted off by our shells. The villages inside of the enemy lines had been even more effectively destroyed than those we had seen in ruins from enemy fire.

After traversing the wreckage of the former town of Bazoches, we went into position on the crest of a large hill, overlooking the town. We had barely time to snatch a bite of our reserve rations, when the order to move ahead again came. Under a very hot sun, and in almost exhausted condition, we hiked for several hours until we reached a deep gully near Perles.



*Quarry within the German lines at Bazoches.*



*Ruins of Bazoches.*

recently held by the Germans. The guns were put into position just off the road and immediately started firing. The men dug into the sides of the gully, and fixed up shelters there. After a few hours, the food was brought up and we hungrily devoured the "gold fish" which the meal consisted of. There was very little firing that night, and we were all able to get a good and much needed night's sleep. The following day, our guns were not very active, and we had an opportunity to shave and clean up in the clear spring which ran through the nearby town of Perles.

At midnight, we left this position to go further forward. We had gone but several hundred meters up the road, when the threatening buzz of a German bombing-plane was heard. Of all the sounds of warfare, this was one of the most uncanny. There was a treacherous calmness, a regularity and an evenness to its low buzz which was in contrast to the emotions it produced, and the work it was bent on. As soon as the sound was heard, our carriages were halted and all movement on the road was stopped. In a few moments, a light was dropped from the plane, near the gully, and remained suspended in the air. It luridly lit up the sky and set off the outline of the objects below in a ghostly light. A tremendous crash followed, and the bomb exploded nearby, throwing up a heavy shower of dirt and rocks. This was followed by two similar explosions. Then the light gradually faded, and the buzz became more and more indistinct as the plane moved away. The bombs had struck a barn nearby, injuring one man from Battery F. We moved ahead, as soon as the danger was over, and arrived in a short while at our new position. Two guns went into position in an old German emplacement on the side of a sunken road. The other two were placed a few hundred meters forward, and to the left of the first two, in an open field. The telephone wires were laid, everything carefully camouflaged, and all details taken care of, so that there would be no unnecessary activity during the day, for the enemy balloons would have us under observation as soon as daylight came on. The men dug into the banks of the road, and before long, everyone had his own hole—his modest haven of rest, shelter and protection.

The next few days there was little activity on either side. The enemy, however, always seemed to hold a few shells in reserve for the uninitiated, and when Propp came up from the echelon, with some underwear for the men, they sent over a few to remind him that a war was on. Ellis didn't at all like the sound of these, and was rather anxious to start back. He handed



*The "sunkenroad" position on the Aisne plateau near Vauverce.*

out shirt after shirt, regardless of size. To Corporal Jacobson, who wore a 36, he gave a 42. "Jake" protested, insisting it was too large. "Oh, it's all right, it's all right," answered Propp, "it'll shrink, it'll shrink." The next man on line was Dyer, who wore a 42. Propp handed him a 36. Dyer insisted that it was too small. "Oh, it's all right, it's all right," again responded Propp, "it'll stretch, it'll stretch." After a half hour of nervous suspense, Propp returned to the echelon. The underwear, however, was not found to be as elastic as his gait, which shrunk as he approached the front, and stretched out as he left it.

The weather had become extremely disagreeable, and it was raining continually. The road became a quagmire, and the holes in which we slept were wet and uncomfortable. There was but little activity on our part, and we had most of the time to ourselves; but we would much rather have been kept constantly occupied, for, with nothing to do, our attention was directed to ourselves. In civil life, with time on our hands, we had had some place to go to, and when the weather was disagreeable and uncomfortable, we had had some place where we could go for shelter. Here we had two alternatives: either we could remain out in the disagreeable weather taking it as it came, or we could crawl into a wet hole in the ground and lie there. We could not sit up for the holes were usually not high enough. We could not remove our wet clothes, for we had no dry ones to put on, and we dared not remain undressed, for who knew at what moment either the enemy or we ourselves would become active. These miserable conditions caused us to be very low in spirit. An epidemic of diarrhœa went the rounds, and added to our suffering. We felt our utter misery for the first time.

Our spirits were not improved by the events at that time. On the morn-



*Shelter at battery position near Vauverec in which Lincoln, McDevitt and Pessalano met their death.*

ing of September 10th, while seated in a dugout, under a covering of heavy elephant iron, Privates Lincoln, Pessalano and McDevitt were struck by an enemy shell, which made a direct hit through the top of the dugout. Lincoln and Pessalano were instantly killed; McDevitt was so seriously wounded that he died the next day in the hospital. On that miserable morning, with the rain pouring down, a small burying detail gathered in the field adjoining the road, and laid these two courageous comrades of ours at rest in the wet ground. Lincoln had just been recommended for appointment as a Corporal, in recognition of his brave and excellent service. Pessalano and McDevitt had been continuously at the front, gallantly sharing all hardships and dangers with us. All three of them were of the best liked among us, and it was with feelings of deep regret and with tears that we saw the wet ground cover them, and the wooden crosses put up to mark their graves.

In addition to the loss of these men, other changes had taken place in the personnel of the battery. Sergeant Mayer had left for Officers' Training School. Lieutenant Eberstadt had been commissioned a Captain and was assigned to Battery F, and Lieutenant Thomas had accompanied him. Lieutenants Amy and Egan had been assigned to our battery to fill these vacancies.

The Observer's Detail, consisting of Corporal Croy, Privates Freeman, Lyons, Tansey, Taylor, Thacker and Ward, with Corporal Miller in charge, were, all this time, doing very dangerous and useful work in supplying us with information as to the activities of the enemy. By the very nature of their duties, they had to be further forward than the rest of us. They had all become experts in climbing trees and maintaining their holds there, while shells



*Graves of Lincoln and Pessalano, Aisne sector  
near "sunken road" position.*

went whistling by them in the air. At the Vesle Front, they had seen a Lieutenant and a Corporal of the 306th F. A. shot down from a nearby tree, where they were observing, and killed; but our detail resolutely continued its work. As their duties covered both observing work at the forward Observation Posts, and liaison with the "pirate pieces," most of their time was spent with advanced infantry detachments. Separated as they were from the battery, they had to subsist entirely on "Corned Bill," and for this alone they deserved a Croix de Guerre.

One day, when "Bennie" Freeman was at the advanced horse lines at Perles, after some very strenuous observing work, his eyes and thoughts turned yearningly to the echelon near Bazoches where he could picture delicious "flapjacks" covered with "jellapo" being prepared by such culinary artists as Brotz and "Louie" Apicella. The thought made Bennie's mouth water and he revolved in his fertile red head many a scheme which would bring about his return to the echelon. Looking around, he saw a powerful, vicious-looking stallion tied to a tree nearby. Bennie hurried over and invited a kick, but the brute refused to comply with his request. Bennie mounted him, pulled his tail, tickled his ribs, and tried in many ways to establish contact between the animal's hoofs and some part of his person, but the old "dog" had suddenly developed a fondness for him, and was as gentle as a lamb. Corporal Miller soon came along, and Bennie, much discouraged, had to return with him to the Observation Post.

On September 12th, Captain Mahon decided that a change of position was desirable, and preparations were made to move out as soon as darkness came on. When the hour to move came, however, the enemy started sending over a choice collection of 150's and we had to take to our holes. A very heavy shelling continued for some time, the shells landing dangerously close. It became so hot that the two forward pieces had to be temporarily abandoned. Corporal Rucker, who was with these pieces when the shelling commenced, was struck in the thumb with a shell splinter, resulting in his being sent to the hospital, and earning for him a wound stripe. Several of the dugouts in the banks of the road were wrecked by shells. The one occupied by Corporals Ostermann and Glass received a direct hit through its roof, entirely wrecking it, and destroying all of their belongings. They, fortunately, were not in it at the time, and so were unharmed.





*Fismes—showing Vesle River in foreground.*



*Main Street, Fismes.*

After much excitement and nervousness, the guns were finally moved to the new position in the early morning. The Telephone Detail, the Machine Gunners, and Corporal Aigeltinger, with Lieutenant Amy in charge, were left behind to take up the wires, the machine guns and the equipment which had been left behind. It was Friday, the 13th, now, and the day started in a way to justify the fears of the most superstitious. As daylight came on, a heavy bombardment started, and the shells were landing directly in the road. Several projectiles went through the camouflage covering the Telephone Central, which was entirely in the open in this position. The danger became greater. At last, Lieutenant Amy found it necessary to abandon the position, and ordered the men to run. Dodging the shells, they ran, only to find, when they reached the open fields, that they were in additional danger from the high-velocity "whizz-bangs" which were coming over from the flank. They all reached the new position, however, in safety, and found the battery already established there. Our position here was about two hundred meters from an abandoned German gun position. There was a long system of deep and substantial trenches, into the sides of which enough holes had been burrowed near the new position to accommodate all of the men, for sleeping purposes. While these holes were damp and uncomfortable, nevertheless, they afforded excellent protection.

During the day enemy aeroplanes were very active and circled almost directly above the position. Many gas shells were sent over by the enemy, but no damage was done. There was very much talk about our being relieved, but we had heard this rumor so often that it was hard to believe.

In the morning of September 14th we supported the French on our right with a heavy barrage. Many aeroplanes and balloons were in the sky as day broke. Our guns continued firing for hours, and the cannoneers worked up to the point of exhaustion. Relief gun-crews were sent up from the echelon, and they took over the work. The strain was telling on every one. It seemed to us all that we could not last much longer.

That night, the welcome news of relief came. An Italian division was to relieve us. We packed up our equipment, drew in our telephone lines, and at midnight, pulled out of the position. The advance echelon joined us near Perles, and we moved ahead at a rapid pace. Enemy shells were coming over, but none came dangerously close until we reached Fismes. The roads approaching this town were badly congested. There was the utmost confusion.

with Italian, French and American troops, all striving for the right-of-way, and our carriages had to be halted until this was in some measure straightened out. At this juncture, the buzz of a bombing-plane was heard, and soon all of this wild mass of traffic was in full view as a flare, dropped from the plane, lit up the sky. Several bombs crashed with a terrific noise nearby. The need for immediate movement from this dangerous position became apparent, and in a few moments the column started moving hurriedly forward. As we passed through the shattered ruins of Fismes, almost on the run, high-velocity shells started coming over. After having survived a front which had been replete with dangers from the very moment of our entry into it, we did not fancy cashing in now, at the last moment, with relief in sight. The "wiz-z—b-a-n-g!" of these shells did not help to reassure us. They descended so speedily upon us that they seemed to come from nowhere, as their unearthly screech was suddenly heard. Fortunately, most of them were "duds," and though they landed very close to us, did no damage.

As we got out of this danger-zone and reached the open fields, where enemy shells no longer bothered us, we felt a sense of relief. Every step took us further away from the horrors and dangers which we had been experiencing continually for the past month. That ever-present strain was gradually being lifted from us, and the feeling of lightness and freedom which its removal caused was exhilarating.

Despite a night of continued and hurried hiking, the morning found us cheerful and happy. It was such a relief to be able to march along in the open sunshine without feeling that enemy eyes were constantly upon us ready to have our lives the moment our attention was the least bit relaxed. And the sights seemed so strange and interesting. It was odd to see houses intact, and occupied by women and children. At the front, we had seen only men in uniform, and the sight, now, of civilian clothes, and of women and children, was another pleasing indication that we were going back to the ways of civilization for a short time at least.

At eight o'clock that morning, we pitched camp in the Bois de Meuniere, through which American divisions had sent the Boche scurrying in their flight from the Ourcq to the Vesle. Although there were many shell-holes on every hand, the pursuit had been sufficiently fast to prevent the usual sickening odors of the battlefield from permeating our present camp. Instead of digging into the ground for shelter, as at the front, we pitched our shelter tents on the grass underneath the big trees. "Mike" Dichich and his assistants soon had our own home fires burning in full blaze, and an excellent meal was in preparation, while we washed and shaved, and laid out our blankets in preparation for a restful night's sleep.

## Chapter VIII.

### GOING INTO THE ARGONNE FOREST.

*September 15-24, 1918.*



IN the days of Indian warfare, the warrior painted himself in a hideous manner, so as to strike terror into the heart of his opponent by his horrible appearance. In modern warfare the opponent is rarely seen, and when he does come to view there is nothing particularly hideous about his appearance. The horrors of sight in modern warfare have not been developed in the individual equipment. This is not true, however, of the horrors of sound. Blood-curdling though the war-cry of the Indian may have been, it was a mild horror in comparison with the sound of the modern battlefield. The ominous buzz of the bombing-plane has been already described. There is also the angry rattle of the machine guns and the cold metallic swish of the sniper's bullet as it cuts the air. The most horrifying of all, however, is the sound of shells as they approach through the air and burst. The high explosive and shrapnel shells when they are first heard start with a low wail and develop very rapidly into an unearthly screech. When the shell is to burst nearby, this screech comes to its maximum overhead, and then there is a sudden terrifying swoop downward as the shell strikes and bursts with a terrific explosion. The gas-shell, though similar in sound, has a lighter but more treacherous wail and ends up in a muffled explosion, similar to the sound of a "dud." These noises are usually accompanied by the boom and roar of nearby guns, and the total result is the symphony of the modern battlefield—a medley of fear-inducing and horrifying sounds.

As we turned in on our first night away from the front, in the Bois de Meuniere none of these nerve-racking sounds were heard. Instead could be heard the laughter and songs of the men as they squatted in groups around their "pup" tents, singing their favorite melodies. There was a great feeling of peace and quiet as they relaxed and rested under a heaven dotted with bright stars. Smoking was allowed and it was a strange sight to see the lights of the cigarettes about in the darkness; a sight which we had never seen at the front, for it might have meant death to us there.

After a restful and undisturbed night's sleep we were beginning to anticipate a pleasant stay in the woods, when we were informed the next morning that we would move that night. Accordingly we started out at eight o'clock. The men were allowed to smoke during rests, and conditions were much better than they had been on marches at the front. After midnight, while we were hiking along a wide road, lined with tall trees, a wind, rain and electric

storm arose. The men presented strange figures in the darkness, with the gale blowing their slickers about their forms as they trod on with their packs in the heavy rain. Every now and then a streak of lightning would illuminate the surroundings. The wind whistled and howled through the trees. The horses became unruly and the drivers had all they could do to hold them in check. The storm subsided after a while, and when, at four A. M. we reached our destination, Chene la Reine, it was clear. We pitched camp in a pretty spot along a winding brook.

Here we remained until the following evening. During the day many of us bathed in the brook and changed our underclothes. The Commissary was opened up by "Moe" Weissberger, who dispensed candy, cookies and smokes, all at a reasonable figure. There was enough to go around and everyone was soon satisfying a sweet tooth which had long been neglected. "Oiving" Klesmer gathered a group around him and soon had a vaudeville show of his own in full swing.

Opening up with "B'—, fellers, I was goin' t' buy cigarettes fer the fellers, but B'—, I forgot," he gained the sympathy of his audience at once. He then told of the days when, as a conductor on the New York street-cars, he had "gypped" the company. "B'—, fellers, when I finished up the day, the President of the Company thanked me fer bringing the car back." He then introduced that popular New York song success, "When It's Peach-Jam Making Time." Wiggling his graceful person and rolling his eyes he sang this with a syncopation entirely original. The audience joined in the chorus and "Oiving's" show was soon a roaring success.

At nightfall the cannoneers and telephone detail departed on trucks with all their equipment. They rode all night, arriving in the morning at Braux-St. Remy, a small village near St. Meneshold, where they were billeted in an old sheep shed, together with similar details from the other batteries of the regiment. The total population of the village was 144. These were the first American troops to be billeted in the town and consequently the few inhabitants did not know of the demand for "pommes de terres" which would arise upon their arrival, and were unprepared. The rations didn't come up for some time, so when they did arrive they were devoured greedily, even though they consisted of "gold-fish" and hard tack.

During the three days that we remained at Braux, the rations consisted almost entirely of "Corned Willy," and the men found it necessary to engage some meals in private houses. Many dinner parties were formed, and chief among these was the one presided over by our only representative from Portugal, the illustrious Antonio Joachim Simas. The party consisted of several French soldiers, several mademoiselles, and several poor "Americains soldats." Joachim, with a wit, wisdom and eloquence which has always distinguished him, made this table the intellectual center of the town. The slanderous tongue of the jealous had suggested that it was the mademoiselles who were drawing him nightly to this house, but let it be said once and for all that it was rather his love for that most delicious of all culinary preparations—roast rabbit—that was the cause of his presence every night. And upon the rabbit hangs the tale of Joachim's financial undoing.

On the night of September 20th, Joachim had just completed a tasty meal,

and, content in body and spirit was returning to the billets. He had left his last fifteen francs with one of the mademoiselles for the purchase and preparation of a rabbit for the following evening. He was already picturing the table spread for the meal, and the thought of the delicately browned meat, floating around in a delicious gravy, was causing an excessive flow of his saliva. Suddenly his deep meditations were disturbed by the rude sound of a bugle. Joachim hastened to the billets to find everyone with pack rolled ready to move out. He had barely time to roll his own before starting on the march and he had to reluctantly leave behind his fifteen francs, taking with him in place of them the dream of a roast rabbit which might have been.

We hiked most of the night and pitched camp in an orchard on the other side of St. Meneshold, where we remained for the next three days. Food conditions continued to be poor as rations were slow in coming up. Klesmer, however, helped out in this emergency. He "salvaged" several bushels of potatoes from a nearby field, requisitioned a frying-pan from a farm-house, and was soon frying potatoes "fer th' boys" at one franc per mess-kit. After Irving had sold out his stock, thus adding many francs to his possessions, he said, "B' —, fellers, I was glad to do it fer th' boys—I'm always glad to help th' boys out."

On the night of September 23rd, we were lined up on the road to await the arrival of the rest of the battery, who had been covering on foot the ground that the trucks had carried us over. The weather had been extremely disagreeable, and after forced day and night marches, they had to turn in on wet and muddy ground. Due to the efforts of Sergeant French and "Bob" Freedman in providing "extras" the meals had been excellent and this had helped ease the strain of the trip. Nevertheless, they were "all in" from lack of sleep and rest, and were glad to hear that their destination would be reached that night.

At 10:30 they arrived. The cannoners took their places behind their respective pieces, and the telephone men behind the telephone wagon. With the battery again complete, the march was resumed. The spirits of everybody were raised by the reunion as greetings were exchanged, and the members of the two groups "swopped" experiences with each other.

After hours of hiking we pulled into very beautiful country. We had just climbed a succession of hills and attained quite an altitude. Tall trees lined the splendid Paris to Metz highroad over which we were travelling. Benches were laid out under the trees and overlooked the valleys which lay on both sides of the road. It seemed like a beautiful parkway. Light mists had settled in the valleys, giving the impression of beautiful lakes. Further off could be seen the dark outline of woods. The air was fresh and invigorating. The setting was so beautiful and so different from what it had been at our last front that it was difficult to realize that any fighting could be going on nearby. Though we now knew that we were returning to some part of the front, we pictured it as being some quiet, restful, sylvan dell, where we could breathe the fresh mountain air and recuperate from our recent hardships.

The combat train left us at Le Claon, where the Echelon was to be established, while the firing battery continued on the march. We passed infantry from the 40th division going in as replacements for our own division. As they were all Western boys and "Rookies," we as old veterans gave them a few

pointers about the front. We soon reached La Chalade. Here we met our guide, "Bennie" Freeman, who directed us up a very steep path to our right. The horses had a difficult pull and it took all the remaining energy of both them and the drivers to get the guns up, after their many days of hard travel. After continued climbing we came into an excellent road running through a heavy evergreen forest. As we proceeded we almost bumped into the muzzles of many large naval guns which were already in position. A regiment of 8-inch howitzers was going into position and the large guns with their tractors were still lined up on the road.

At last we pulled into our own position, which was in the woods, only a few yards off the road. The guns were immediately laid by Lieutenant Richard and the usual net of camouflage spread over them. Corporal Levins and Chief Mechanic Philpot put on the final touches, so that when daylight came our arrival would not be apparent to the eyes of enemy fliers. When this was completed we tumbled off to sleep in the surrounding woods, with the feeling of satisfaction derived from a job well done.

## Chapter IX.

### THE ARGONNE.

*September 24th to October 18th, 1918.*



NE of the main advantages of having an army made up of young men is the fact that it is so much easier to maintain a hopeful morale in a youthful army than in one of older men. When faced with two probabilities as to the course which future events might take, one pleasant and the other unpleasant, the natural tendency of healthy youth is to believe in the cheerful probability. Optimism is so natural to the young soldier that one who accepts the unpleasant probability is usually called "Calamity" or "Gloom," or some other name indicating his pessimism. This trait persists despite frequent disappointments. When we had left Camp de Songe we were faced with the probability of going to another training camp or going to the front. We believed we were going to another camp, but soon found ourselves on the Lorraine front. When we had left the Lorraine front, we believed we were going to Italy or the Philippines, where we could sport campaign hats and dress shoes, but instead we landed at the Vesle front. Now, after being disappointed in our hope that we were going to a rest camp, we adopted the belief that we were going into a quiet, inactive sector where we could recuperate in the midst of woodland charms, but were soon again disillusioned. We were in the Argonne Forest and a tremendous drive was soon to commence.

The Argonne is made up of a series of parallel ridges covered with heavy woods, chiefly pine and hemlock. Deep valleys intervene between these ridges. Our position was on the crest of one of these, while the enemy was strongly fortified on the ridges ahead of us, where he had had four years to render his position secure. Our own artillery was so greatly concentrated here that for kilometres guns adjoined guns, frequently with no more than 10 metres between them. The entire 2nd Battalion of our regiment was placed on a front of 100 metres. On our division front more than 200 pieces of artillery were placed. One could walk along and see on both sides of the road battery after battery, both French and American, of every size and description. And on the wooded ridge to our rear there was a similar concentration.

On the rear slope of our ridge were numerous trenches and dugouts all well prepared and fortified, in which our men took shelter. Further down the slope there were dugouts elaborately fitted with shower-baths and other conveniences, which the French had used during the past three years while there had been practically no activity here. A drive through these heavy



*Site of First Battery D position in Argonne Forest, September 26th, 1918.*

woods and over these steep ridges had up to now been considered practically impossible. Many of the French soldiers who knew the sector from experience expressed great astonishment at the idea of launching an attack against such defences with winter approaching.

The day following our arrival was clear and sunshiny, and the air very invigorating. There was a busy stir everywhere as trees were being sawed through to make firing possible. Telephone lines were being laid and camouflage was being perfected. Everybody had his own job and everyone was doing it cheerfully. The sight of the tremendous concentration of guns and the feeling that we were going to "pull off" something big on the enemy, who from his inactivity seemed to be entirely unsuspecting, had filled us with confidence and a new enthusiasm. The old dreams of a sector of quietness and rest had been entirely forgotten, and we were all eager for the fireworks to start. Sergeant Aigeltinger and Corporal Stuart with a large detail and every available G. S. wagon worked furiously day and night bringing up every round of ammunition which they could beg, borrow or steal. As a result of their efforts the respectable total of 3,000 rounds was accumulated at the battery dump.

Every precaution was being taken to keep the enemy in ignorance as to the presence of Americans there. Our men who worked in positions where they might be observed were required to wear French uniforms. After the telephone lines had been laid no conversation was permitted over them for fear that enemy amplifiers might pick up some English word and so learn of our presence.

On the evening of September 25th we were informed that the big show was coming off that night. Most of the trees were still standing, although they had been sawed through, so that it would take only a few additional strokes of the axe to fell them. As the guns were located in a dense part of the forest it meant that hundreds of big trees must be levelled before a shot could be fired. Under cover of darkness the final chopping commenced. Under the skillful strokes of such craftsmen as Philpot, Price, Simonson, P'faff, Downes, Beglan, Heller, and Walters the giant trees were soon crashing to earth. We waited with eagerness for the hour to commence firing to add our boost to the smash which, with our usual optimism, we felt sure would be the final one. At midnight the guns to our left started firing, and shortly afterwards the "heavies" began, with their resonant boom, shelling the enemy





*No Man's Land, Argonne.*



*Some barbed wire in No Man's Land.*

rear areas. Our firing schedule began at 2:30 A. M., and then the big noise started. Every gun, big and little, French and American, was soon booming and banging and barking away at the enemy, and the grand medley of noises was music to our ears. For three hours we kept up harassing fire on German lines of communication. At 5:30 o'clock, the "zero" hour for the infantry attack, we laid down a rolling barrage at the rate of three rounds per gun per minute. We kept this up at varying rates of speed until noon.

The morning had dawned clear and agreeable. The valley was filled with smoke from the firing and the air was full of the smell of powder. Lines of Boche prisoners were being brought in, and as we curiously scrutinized them they did not seem to be as formidable as we, in imagination, had pictured them. They were for the most part old men, and seemed to be a docile and cringing lot. The divisions facing us in this sector at the beginning of the drive were mostly Landwehr and Reserve Troops.

News came in over the wire that the infantry was making splendid progress through the numerous roads of barbed-wire entanglements and trench systems. The preliminary bombardments had smashed these up considerably and the dense rolling barrage had made the few remaining Boche front-line troops take cover in their deep dug-outs. Here they were found by the "dough-boys," who either took them prisoner or finished them with hand-grenades, depending on whether the detached groups had any fight left in them or not.

By evening we learned that all of our objectives had been attained and that the infantry was still advancing, so we were not surprised when the order came to move out. At midnight we started. We had to descend the steep ridge on which we were, and ascend the one in front of us, and it needed all the skill of our drivers to accomplish this in the inky darkness. Time and again the carriages were stuck, but Sergeant French or Corporal Schwab were soon around, and with the assistance of the cannoneers on the wheels the difficulty was quickly straightened out.

We arrived at our new position, designated on the French maps as Sept Fontaines, in the early morning and were soon firing. The enemy did not bark back at all, and we had no occasion to seek protection in the long system of *abris* which were constructed in the slope of the ridge to the rear of our guns, though we did use them for sleeping purposes. At noon "Lonie" Apicella, "Charlie" Geyer and "Izzie" Schwartz, who had accompanied us on the advance, had mess ready, and wonder of all wonders, we had home made apple



*No Man's Land in the Argonne where the Infantry went over Sept. 26th, 1918.*



*A familiar sign on the much used road through the Argonne.*

pie. In civil life this would have been nothing unusual, but to us now it was an event worthy of special mention. Due to the shortage of sugar in the daily diet, we had developed an abnormal hankering for sweets, so that chocolate and candy were worth their weight in gold. Apple pie was in the same class, and to be able to have such a luxury on an advance made the movement doubly a success. Unfortunately there were no "seconds," though "Dan" Philpot, with his usual success in such matters, succeeded in bluffing "Izzie" out of a second portion. Galiano also, on the plea that it was "for the officers," was successful in getting a few additional portions, but the expression of satisfaction and elation on his face for the rest of the day was a sure indication that the officers had never seen the "seconds."

The following afternoon we moved out again in a further advance, passing over territory occupied by the Germans that morning. As we crossed "No-Man's Land," the deadly work of our large concentration of artillery was visible. Almost every foot of the ground was plowed up by shell-holes and the negro engineers of the 92nd Division had their hands full constructing a hasty dirt road over the trackless area. Dead bodies, both American and German, were stretched out here and there along the road. There was not a single live tree for more than one kilometre, nothing but the bare, blackened skeleton trunks of trees. The flocks of black crows flying about in the dark threatening clouds overhead added to the picture of desolation and destruction which was stretched out before us—truly a "No-Man's Land."

It started to rain very heavily, so that when we pulled into position near Abri St. Louis we worked in a downpour. A company of colored engineers was assigned to aid us prepare the emplacements. The position was in the midst of a maze of trenches and shell-holes—a reserve trench system of the Boche line. As no fires could be built we had to content ourselves with a cold meagre mess consisting of a "Corned Willy" sandwich. The rain continued all night and when we awoke the following morning we found our blankets and clothes dripping wet. We gathered around the fire which the cooks were now allowed to build, and while breakfast was being prepared tried to get some of the moisture out of our clothes.

The next two days we remained here, and on October 1st started on another advance. Dead bodies, again, were stretched out all along the road. Wooden signs with German inscriptions on them were posted at all cross-

roads. It seemed to us as though we were already advancing into Germany. Curman tried to pronounce the names of a few of the "strasses" we were passing over, but almost broke his teeth in the attempt. Walters, Brotz, and the other Dutchmen of the Battery had no such difficulty, however, and "Wilhelmstrasse" and "Konigstrasse" came as easily to them as "Begorrah" did to Pat.

When we arrived at our position at Pont a l'Anne we received a warm reception. Machine-gun bullets were whistling by and "whizz-bangs" were bursting all around us. This was close to the front line, which we could judge from the clearness with which we heard the enemy machine guns as they rattled off their charges. Our own infantry and machine guns were close by. The need for quick action was seen and the guns were rapidly laid and camouflaged and telephone communication established. Every one dug a "fox-hole" for the night without further urging.

The enemy continued to be very active while we were forced to remain quiet, for we were so close to them that we could not fire for fear of not clearing the trees ahead and our own infantry lines. At about 3:00 A. M. of this pitch-black night Boche activity increased. Meehan was wounded by a "whizz-bang" fragment in his arm during his tour of guard at the guns. Bakken, who was on an ammunition detail was hit by a shell fragment. He was carried by Sergeant French and Wagner, Lindgren and Nihan to the telephone hut, from which Lieutenant Richard and the medical men Robinson and Epstein were summoned. First-aid treatment was applied to him while an ambulance was hurried up by Corporal Oglesby, our faithful Battalion agent, whose ability in prowling around in the darkness won him the reputation of being the best agent in the battalion. Bakken, Meehan and an infantryman, who was also injured nearby, were taken away. Bakken unfortunately died on the way to the hospital, bringing the total of our dead to eight. His quiet and uncomplaining devotion to duty had won him a warm place in our hearts.

As the infantry advance had been temporarily checked the present position was useless and a change was ordered. On the afternoon of October 3rd we drew back to Abri de Crochet and went into position near an old German gun emplacement there. An elaborate system of trenches and dugouts was found nearby and all men who were not actually with the guns had an excellent place in which to sleep. The kitchen was established in the valley to our rear. For the next six days we lived in comparative comfort. The dugouts were furnished with wire bunks and were the best we had yet encountered. Excellent meals were being prepared by the cooks. The firing schedule was not very heavy on account of the impossibility of observation in the forest and the men got plenty of sleep. "Jerry" did not locate our position as it had been excellently camouflaged by those past-masters in the art of deception, "Steve" Levins and "Pete" Crean. All of these facts contributed to make our stay here comparatively restful. During this period, Sergeant Clackner came up with some equipment for us. New underwear was issued, and as we discarded the old, many a "cootie" lost a home. As new breeches were also issued, Sergeant Osterman could again walk around without being guilty of indecent exposure.

It was during this time that the famous "Lost Battalion" became separ-



*Wire entanglements in No Man's Land, Argonne.*

ated from its support during an attack. Although the troops involved were of the 154th Infantry Brigade adjoining the one our regiment was supporting, we joined in the artillery preparation of the successful relief attack that rescued the beleaguered troops after a six-day siege. This thrust, as well as advances on our right flank caused the Boche to retire from their strong position along the La Viergette-Binarville highroad. On October 9th, the infantry having swept forward, we followed and took up a position near the La Viergette crossroad. Our stay here was not very long, however, for the next morning we were on the march again, pulling into position about 4:00 P. M. in the Bois de la Taille. The P. C. was established in a long trench and the guns were put into position nearby. The enemy was still burning towns ahead of us, so we did not anticipate a very long stay. We did remain for two days, however, and these days were full of excitement.

One of our pieces, with Lieutenant Richard and with a gun-crew comprised of Sergeant Grandin, Lambe, Barth, Downes, Farrell, Coffey, Howard and Aske, and a telephone detail made up of Corporals Schapiro and Jonas, McBride, Talbot, Thompson and Tansey, went forward to do some direct firing if possible. The report was current that the remaining three pieces would also go further forward for direct fire. In the afternoon of October 12th the orders came to move. Every necessary preparation was made and we were already lined up ready to pull out when the orders were cancelled and the guns put back into position immediately. We fired for about one-half hour and then the order to move forward again came. This time we did pull out and marched very hurriedly for about two kilometers. We drew our pieces into a field near the village of La Besogne and waited there while the Captain hurried down to General Wittenmyer's P. C. for further instruc-

tions. When he returned he informed us that we would stay there for the night instead of going further forward. This was to be a half-way stop towards the dangerous position from which we would have to do the direct firing.

In view of the importance and risk of our mission, and because of the fact that Lieutenant Richard was away with his "pirate" piece we were temporarily assigned two other officers, Lieutenants Stevens and Daniels. The next morning Captain Mahon, Lieutenant Lunny, Lieutenant Stevens, Chief Mechanic Philpot and Corporal Glass left as a reconnaissance party to decide on the forward position. The battery awaited their return with much interest. When they did arrive it was learned that they had found a suitable position, and the battery was to go forward that night. In the afternoon a digging detail was sent ahead to prepare the position and the telephone detail to lay its lines. The location was in open view of the enemy, and the utmost care had to be taken to avoid detection. As they were within range of snipers' bullets it was necessary for the men to crawl on their bellies as they worked, in order to attract no attention. Enemy aeroplanes were very active overhead and operations often had to be suspended because of them. To their right enemy shells were crashing at regular intervals into the town of Mareq. Every preparation was made, so that the guns could come in that night under cover of darkness and so that after dawn there would be no unusual activity. We could then await the moment for the attack and open up. When evening came the firing battery was in readiness for moving and we anticipated a big experience. The Captain was almost in constant touch with Lieutenant-Colonel McCleave and General Wittenmyer. Just as we were starting out a runner from the General's P. C. came up with orders that we would not go forward but would take up a position right where we were. Pleased with the turn events had taken we worked with a vim. The telephone detail had a very difficult task laying a line to Infantry Headquarters, but, after a tiring night of work for the entire detail, communication was, as usual, satisfactorily established. The ammunition detail under Sergeant Aigeltinger also worked all night bringing up shells over the muddy sunken road which led from our position to La Besogue. At daybreak everything was in order.

In the meantime life had been as pleasant and uneventful as usual in the Echelon at Lancon. The busiest department there was the Commissary, which was always in full swing. Undisturbed by the wild din of the battlefield they lived their lives in quiet and peace, being reminded that a war was on only when some of the men returning from the front for a rest told them of it. On Sunday, October 13th, after the inhabitants of the peaceful place had performed their morning ablutions, had shaved and manicured their fingernails and had had their usual buttered toast for breakfast, Chaplain Howard arrived to deliver a sermon. Germany had just expressed her willingness to accept settlement based on President Wilson's peace terms, and there was even more than the usual note of hope in the Chaplain's speech as he told about it. The end of the war was only a matter of days he informed his willing listeners. His address made a marked impression on everyone, and when he finished his audience was convinced that the war was well-nigh at an end. Sergeants Rugiero and Ronayne, Corporal Freedman, Machby and Joe Newman had just



*Orchard near Mareq where Lt. Richard's  
salping gun operated.*

returned to the rear, being relieved after many days of hardship, and, of course, the thought of peace was a pleasing one to them. They had listened with eagerness to the Chaplain's words and were absolutely convinced that this was the last day of the war. It was a beautiful mild sunshiny day, and the future looked bright with hope. It certainly would be a shame to be caught by an enemy shell at that last moment. Though they were all religious youths and anxious to join their Maker in due time, they did not feel that their time was due yet, so they held a joint consultation to devise ways and means by which they could feel certain that they would be among the living the following morning when the treaty of peace was read. "Bob," with his usual fertility of resource, discovered a large, substantial, bomb-proof dugout nearby, and in it they decided to take shelter for the night. A pinochle and a poker deck were provided and they were soon settled down for an enjoyable and secure night.

After a peaceful slumber, during which they had many a pleasant dream, they awoke the next morning feeling very joyful and thankful that they were still alive. The peacefulness of the echelon atmosphere helped to sustain their fond hopes and when they issued forth into the light of the day they felt certain that never again would they have to wear a "tin derby." They soon learned the truth, however, and Joe was convinced that it was all a scheme and that the chaplain's speech was nothing more than a "morale builder."

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Richard and his "pirate piece" crew needed no argument to convince them that the war was still on. After they had left us to go forward for direct fire they had taken a position on a wooded ridge to the right and in front of La Besogne. The enemy had direct observation and whether or not he detected their presence, he made things pretty hot. Here it was that "Paddy" Bowler lost his team through enemy shell fire. "Paddy" was greatly grieved at this misfortune, but though he loved his team it was not the fact that they had been killed that worried him, for, after all, as he expressed it, "The good Lord wud take care of thim," but the fact that, having lost his team, he might lose his status as a driver was causing him much concern, for he didn't care to become "wan of thim common cannoneers."

Two days later at midnight the order to move forward came. The infantry was to attack St. Juvin and force the crossing of the Aire River. It was only

the heroic work of Corporal McDonough and the drivers Bradshaw, Olans Johnson, Christensen, Fisher, O'Brien, Barham and Carlsen that made it possible to draw the gun and the two G. S. wagons over the very rough roads, and the wrecked railroad beds. As day broke they advanced down the La Besogne-Mareq road into the latter town. Although they were in plain view and an attractive target the Boche preferred not to fire on them just yet. It took eight horses to pull the gun into position up the hill to the east of Mareq. Just as they hurried into position the enemy registered on them, but by quick work the horses were gotten away in time. On account of the severe shelling throughout the area it was impossible to maintain telephone communication with the infantry. A runner brought the message to fire at any good target, of which there were plenty by this time. At 8 A. M. our infantry started "Over the Top," and our machine guns to the rear of the "pirate piece" opened up a barrage. Caught between our own bullets and the enemy shells the cannoneers could only get off a few rounds before they had to abandon the piece temporarily. A second attempt to fire was greeted with a murderous deluge of high explosives which prevented any effective work. After the machine-gun fire had subsided it was decided to change position. Johnson was missing and it was later found that he was in the hospital wounded. Tansey had also been hit and was evacuated. Two of the battalion telephone detail had become casualties trying to keep the line in repair.

During a lull in the shelling the limbers were driven down to the gun and made a skillful escape over the rough ground and amid further shelling. With great difficulty the gun was pulled up the forward slope of the hill and continued firing from there. It remained in this position the next few days and because of the splendid observation accomplished some effective work against the Boche. In one instance an enemy concentration that appeared to be gathering for a counter-attack was dispersed with shrapnel.

On October 18th we were relieved by the 78th Division. Though we had a long hike through muddy and rough roads the warm sun amid the clear sky and the fact that we were leaving a front which promised to be our last made us all cheerful and happy. As we were passing beyond Chatel Chehery a terrific explosion took place, sending up a very heavy shower of dirt and stones. It was one of the mines left behind for our benefit by the enemy. We proceeded without mishap, however, and in the early evening reached our destination, Four de Paris. The regiment was encamped between La Hazaree and Four de Paris, on the ground that had been the original "No-Man's Land," now about 20 kilometers from the front line.

## Chapter X.

### IN RESERVE.

*October 18th to October 31st, 1918.*



URING our stay at the last front we had made the very intimate acquaintance of the "cootie," vulgarly termed the louse. There is an old adage that too much familiarity breeds contempt, and it must be admitted that their increasing intimacy with us did not add to our respect for them. While this feeling was being bred in us, large "cootie" families were being bred on us, and ere many days hosts of bewhiskered "cootie" sires with families that would have done a Mormon proud, were doing squads East, squads West and a variety of other formations on the excellent drill-grounds provided by our persons. The theory of race suicide had not as yet been preached by "cootie" demagogues with the result that they still had the old-fashioned habit of producing large families. They had respect for neither race, color, rank nor previous condition of cleanliness and no ground was too sacred for them to tread on.

One day while at the last position, Sergeant Aigeltinger, who was convinced that even a "cootie" would be awed by the name of Wall Street made a bet with Sergeant Grandin that none of these pestiferous insects could be found on him. A committee of judges, consisting of Sergeant Darling, Corporal Freedman and Corporal Schlosser, all of whom were admitted to be competent judges on the subject, were chosen. "Tingle" removed his nether shirt and exposed the surface of his freckled back to view. It took no magnifying glass to see the large "cootie" stallion which was then galloping down his back. The said "cootie" was almost large enough to wear horseshoes, and there were some suggestions made to adopt it as the battery mascot. As the presence of one of his kind would seem to indicate, there were many infant "cooties" also present, and the judges, after due deliberation, rightly decided that Sergeant Grandin was the winner.

The day after our arrival at Four de Paris, we were informed that we were going to be "deloused." Though we were not as yet initiated into the mysteries of this proceeding we knew in a general way that it promised to rid us of the pest, so we greeted the news with cheers. We marched to the "Delousing Station" nearby, where we removed all of our clothes. As these were taken off they were thrown into a heap amid the sad and touching sentiment of the song, "How Can I Bare to Leave Thee." We then passed into a tent and were allowed five minutes under a shower. At the end of this period the water was turned off and we were rushed, still wet, through the cold air, into an adjoining tent, where an abnormal barrage of shoes, breeches, shirts, etc.,





*Site of Battery D gun position behind Sommerance for the November 1st attack.*

was fired at us. We put these on, outside of the tent, regardless of fit, and then returned to the battery, where uniforms were changed about. Glass and Petersen "swopped" breeches and were then both properly fitted as to length; Noxon and Propp did likewise with their blouses and were fitted as to their width.

The two days that we spent in this camp were marked by heavy rain, with the result that the low ground was very muddy and living conditions in our wet "pup" tents disagreeable. On the morning of the third day, we pulled out of Fomr de Paris and hiked to Les Islettes, a railhead several kilometres away. There we pitched out tents in a strip of woods on the slope of a hill, ditched and camouflaged them, and in good spirits, settled down for a short stay, believing that the railroad nearby would soon carry us away to some rest point. Though we were still being held in reserve we all believed that as soon as transportation was ready we would be relieved. Furloughs had already been issued to Lieutenants Richard and Lunny, and were ready for the men.

On the evening of October 24th this dream came to an end when we were ordered to prepare to return to the front. All furloughs were cancelled. The following morning we were up at 4:30 and in a few hours were on the march, retracing our steps to the front. After a full day of hiking we arrived in the early evening near Chatel Chehery, where we pitched camp. A French newspaper was obtained from a French soldier and it had published President Wilson's reply to Germany, expressing his willingness to discuss an armistice with responsible representatives of the German people. The fact that Germany was begging for it, and the rumors we were hearing about conditions there and in Austria, made us feel more confident than ever that the conflict would soon be over. And though we were disappointed at being recalled to the front so soon, this feeling quickly gave way to one of enthusiasm and hope.

The following morning a detail of cannoneers, under Sergeant Lowell, and the Telephone Detail, under Sergeant Osterman, started for the gun position. After a long hike over very congested roads, through Chehery and Fleville they arrived at the position, on the slope of a hill, in a small strip of woods behind Sommerance. The work was done with great diligence, and when evening came on the guns were laid, a long line to Battalion Headquarters stretched and every preparation made for firing. A telephone guard and a guard on the pieces were left behind while the rest of the detail returned to

the echelon at Chatel Chehery. These guards were relieved daily for the next few days. The rest of the battery remained at the echelon, awaiting orders to move forward.

Physically the men were in poor condition, as many as twenty-one being on sick report in one day. Their spirit, however, was excellent. The news had just arrived of Austria's withdrawal from the conflict, and Germany was reported to be growing weaker daily. Though the preparations that were being made, such as parking in a forward position the caissons loaded with ammunition, indicated that we expected to make a rapid and arduous advance, we felt that it only needed a final rapid thrust to put an end to the Boche, and with this end in view we pushed our efforts to the utmost. Every evening there were spirited discussions around the kitchen with "Peace" as the subject, and the usual wild Army rumors went the rounds.

On the evening of October 31st orders came to move up to the front before midnight. At about 9 o'clock the gun-crews and details started out in groups at half hour intervals. Many feeling handshakes were exchanged between those going forward and those remaining behind. The opinion was general that we were facing the hardest struggle of any we had yet undertaken, and that if we survived this one we would never have to face another. With a feeling of determined energy and purpose we pulled out of our position to the main road below.

## Chapter XI.

### ARGONNE-MEUSE.

*November 1st to November 11th.*



THE road lay clear ahead of us, with no other vehicles in sight. As we started forward at a brisk gait the nearby booming of the big guns could be heard. There was a resonance and strength to their lusty roar that filled us with confidence. The firing was only of the usual proportion at that time so as not to give the enemy any premature indications of coming events. We had seen in the daylight the heavy concentration of artillery all along this very road and we knew that there were thousands, unseen by us now, who were, like ourselves, waiting for the signal to rush forward in a vigorous and hearty effort to put an end forever to the threat of military autocracy.

As we neared Fleville the infantry from other divisions were encountered on the road, and notable among these were the marines of the 2nd Division. Chelery was full of troops and lights were being carelessly flashed about here and there. Fleville was the scene of like activity. The country seemed to be swarming with troops.

At Fleville we turned off the main road, through a ravine to the East, where were concentrated a continuous succession of heavy batteries, French and American, ranging from six-inch rifles to 9.2-inch howitzers. Our position was about two kilometres beyond. Fox-holes had already been dug, and though the infantry waiting to go into the lines occupied most of these, shelter was finally provided for all of us. Our artillery became increasingly active, and were it not for the fact that we knew that the barrage was to start at a later hour, the din might have led us to believe that it was already on. The enemy, who had been up to now quiet, suddenly commenced to retaliate and his shells were dropping everywhere. Fortunately our position was well dug in.

At 3:30 our machine-gun barrage opened up with a heavy and continuous rattle. At 5:00 all the artillery joined in, and for hours thereafter there was a terrific noise as thousands of shells followed each other through the air towards the enemy. The restrained vim and enthusiasm of the men seemed to be venting itself now in a wild uproar. Every "bang!" seemed to have a sound of purpose and finality. The doughboys went over the top at 5:30 and our fire increased. The artillery of our division fired on special targets and because of the shortage of ammunition there was no rolling barrage.

It was a clear, crisp, cold day and the sunshine soon melted the frost

which had covered the ground during the night. On the main road nearby long lines of German prisoners were being brought in, and we then saw that our efforts had resulted in success. German carts and horses, captured during the night, were already being used for carrying supplies. At noon the order to move forward arrived and before evening we were in position on the slope of a hill behind St. Juvin.

Early next morning we again started forward. Encouraging news of our success was arriving and our spirits were high. We passed through St. Juvin and Champigneulle and all along the route the corpses of comrade and enemy alike were stretched out. After ascending a very steep hill, with much difficulty, a messenger arrived with the news that our infantry had already advanced through Verpel, several kilometres ahead, and that the enemy was still retreating. The battery halted at Verpel to await further orders. The reconnaissance party was ahead selecting a position.

In the meantime a heavy rain had started falling and the men and horses were thickly bespattered with mud. The sky, leaden and overcast, was filled occasionally with crows flying in flocks through the air and preying on the many dead horses lying along the route, which added to the cheerlessness of the scene. Anticipating a stop near Verpel, Sergeant French established the echelon there and the cooks started preparing mess. "Jerry" sent over a few shells into the town, and harassed the roads, so that the prospects for a quiet night did not seem very promising. At last the major and battery commanders returned from their reconnaissance and we immediately moved forward. It was now dark and the only lights we were guided by were the frequent bursts of shells on the road ahead of us. The road towards Thenorgnes on which we were travelling had already been heavily shelled and it took our last ounce of patience and energy to get the horses and carriages over the shell-holes.

At last we went into position off the road near an old mill, midway between Verpel and Thenorgnes. As it was a black night each gun had to be guided in turn with the aid of a flashlight over the shell-torn field. The American heavy batteries had pounded this vicinity in the preliminary bombardment of November 1st, opening up regular craters in the earth. When Private Keller was taking his team back to the road from the gun position one of his big blacks decided to seek cover from the shelling and dropped into a gaping shell-hole. Sergeant Von Pless came to the rescue with a picket rope and a squad of cannoneers in order to fish him out. But the horse was perfectly satisfied with his secure P. C. and refused to move. It was impossible to budge his great weight so the attempt was given up, and the animal spent a rather cramped but safe night where he was. In the morning he was finally dislodged with the aid of ropes and threats of being charged with cowardice in the face of the enemy.

The men did not "dig in" that night as the ground was so wet and muddy that every spadeful of dirt would be replaced by an equal quantity of water. So we pitched our pup tents near the guns, using half of our blankets to soak up the water and keeping the remainder for cover. The shelling continued for some time and finally Battery F on our right was routed out of its position with a loss of eight horses. In the darkness the telephone men laid a long

line and, as usual, Thompson, H. A., was doing his share. He advanced very cautiously, picking each step as he carried the wire forward. Suddenly there was a strong tug on the wire ahead of him which pulled "H. A." forward and, despite his caution, landed him at the bottom of an icy stream. Recovering himself and emitting a few choice Blaisdell expressions, which were entirely pardonable under the circumstances, he withdrew with wet clothes and dampened ardor to the privacy of his pup tent where he spent the night in midly, again donning his wet garments in the morning.

Starting forward again early the next day we passed through Thenorgues and when we reached Buzancy it was still in flames from the fires caused by hostile shelling the previous night. There were many shops in the town, and the signs and inscriptions, all in German, showed that the Boche had been settled here in comfort for some time. As we passed through the narrow streets the heat from the still smouldering walls on both sides of us could be felt. Bar and Haricourt were the next villages we passed, and as we drew out to the hills beyond we could see circling around on the serpentine roads ahead of us long caravans in khaki: infantry, artillery, supply wagons—a vast army, all pressing forward victoriously, swarming over the country which had been abandoned a few hours before. Large squadrons of bombing-planes were sailing through the sky in varied formations and were dropping tons of their deadly missiles on the retreating enemy. No less than two hundred American planes were swarming overhead as the battery approached Autruche. When a few lone German planes attempted to sail over our newly won terrain they received so warm a reception from our machine and anti-aircraft guns that they were forced to make an immediate about-face, leaving with us one of their number. There was victorious activity both in the air and on land, and we were more than ever convinced that this time the enemy was beaten for good and all.

At this time we were joined by Lieutenant Yarbrough, with a section from A Battery, to replace the "pirate piece" which had gone forward from St. Juvin with Lieutenant Richard and the second section gun-crew.

The number of horses throughout the brigade had dwindled to such low proportions due to shell fire and overexertion that each regiment of artillery was ordered to consolidate its transport facilities and send only one battalion of guns forward. The remainder of the horses were to be used to rush ammunition and supplies over the much-extended line of communication. The 2nd Battalion, Batteries D, E and F, was selected to go forward in pursuit of the Boche.

In the early evening, after a full day of hiking, we pulled into position again on the muddy slope of a hill between Autruche and Fontenoy. Though the day had started clear and sunshiny it was now again raining, and the same hardships as on the previous night were encountered. No mess had been provided since early morning, and then we had only eaten the usual bacon sandwich, made up now of hardtack and bacon. This was not the fault of the mess sergeant or the cooks, however, for they had prepared a mess for us; but Lieutenant Lunny and Corporal Barger were wandering about somewhere in the enemy lines with the ration cart. This situation was somewhat relieved by the fact that during the march we had passed by fields of cabbage,

beets and turnips, which the enemy had cultivated, and to our famished palates these raw vegetables afforded a tasty meal.

The truth of the adage "necessity is the mother of invention" had more than once been exemplified by the men in providing themselves with food and shelter. Whether it was by "salvaging" or otherwise the tools and material necessary for any work were always found, and it needed but the emergency to stir up their resourcefulness. The result was that the attitude that "nothing is impossible" was developed, and it was this more than anything else which had made the American successful where others had failed. One of the finest instances of this fertility of resource was given us on one occasion by Galiano Anselmi, who was Lieutenant Richard's orderly. Galiano had long possessed a healthy appetite, which frequently enabled him to devour the "seconds" which he had taken "for the officers" without disturbing his digestion or his conscience. One of the lieutenant's cigars had just sharpened his appetite, and Galiano was carefully considering ways and means of providing himself with food. At this juncture Lieutenant Richard sent for him and told him to open up a can of jam. Galiano knew that but two cans remained—one of a flavor disliked by the lieutenant and the other, one of his favorites. He immediately opened up the distasteful can and hurried to bring it to the lieutenant, who after one look at it said, "Anselmi, you can have this can, bring me the other one." Having already gained half of his prize, Galiano cast about for a means of securing the remainder. As he opened the second can, he espied a large bug of the centipede variety wandering over the ground nearby. He seized this unsuspecting victim and after having imbedded him in the luscious jam in such a manner that he could still attract attention by wiggling his numerous legs, he turned the cover down again, and with a very faithful and zealous air delivered the can. He hastened away, but, as he expected, was soon recalled by the lieutenant, who said, "Here, Anselmi, take this can, too, I don't care for any jam this evening." Galiano now removed the bug, and he and his fellow "dogrobbers" enjoyed the two cans, while the lieutenant was forced to resort to a portion of "Corned Willy."

The next day, November 4th, we were on foot again early in the morning, and slowly pushed our way forward, following the long caravan which already preceded us on the march. As we pulled into St. Pierremont, the front line infantry was on the slope of a large hill to our right. The enemy was heavily shelling the road ahead of us, so we halted while a reconnaissance party went ahead to see the lay of the land. A few minutes later Lieutenant MacDougall, of E Battery, came galloping down the road with some E Battery men following. He had taken his Pirate Piece into position in open view of the enemy over the hill ahead of us in order to attack a machine-gun nest. They soon received a terrific shelling and were forced to abandon the piece, after suffering three casualties. As the advance for that day had been halted we went into position behind a convenient slope nearby. "Jerry's" shells landed dangerously close for several hours, but before morning our "doughboys" had chased them far enough ahead to assure us of another good day's hiking.

We spent the following morning taking up our telephone lines and preparing to advance again. In the afternoon we moved forward. As we reached an old prison-camp in the Bois de Yonc, a power-house, recently abandoned

by the enemy, was still in flames. A hollow nearby seemed to have some advantages as a position for the night, so we were halted on the road, while Major Devereux and the battery commanders rode over to investigate. A battery of the 306th F. A. was already in position on the other side of the road. While we were awaiting the decision of the major and captain the enemy suddenly started shelling the road several hundred metres ahead of us, and in a few moments there was a scene of the wildest confusion. Machine-gun carts came rattling down towards us with the drivers standing up in them, excitedly whipping their horses and urging them on. The shells, both high explosive and gas, soon started coming much closer to us and we placed ourselves in positions calculated to give us the best shelter, while we adjusted the gas-masks on the horses and ourselves. Terrific explosions were now throwing up dirt and rocks on all sides, while we impatiently stood our ground. Then, with a tremendous crash, a shell burst through the roof of a shack, occupied by the battery from the 306th. Several other crashes followed, and smoke and flame burst through the roof. In a few seconds the men inside wildly rushed out, adjusting their gas-masks as they ran. Many were covered with blood and dirt. One, already dead, was carried out by his comrades on a stretcher. Two others, severely wounded and covered with blood, were helped out also. The excitement was intense as the enemy fire swept back and forth. At last it died down and we drew our pieces into the wooded hollow, and, in the heavy rain which was now falling, established ourselves for the night. From time to time during the night the enemy renewed his shelling, but the morning found us all safe and sound, though tired, hungry and wet.

In the afternoon we again advanced. As we reached the town of La Besace we were greeted very gladly by the civilian inhabitants who had been liberated by our advance. As we marched through the muddy and flooded streets we saw smiling and happy faces everywhere. White flags were floating from the tops of many of the houses, as an indication that they were inhabited by civilians. The men, women and children lined up on the sides of the street had nothing but cheers and praise for the Americans, who had freed them after fifty months of Boche slavery. We were really moved by the smiling faces everywhere, and the consciousness that we were the cause of this happiness had an excellent effect upon our morale. We felt more than ever the righteousness of the cause we were fighting for, and when we left the town and went into position for the night on the slope of a steep hill, we felt that, though we were suffering from hunger and hardship, it was not being done in vain. Though some we had left behind in America were suffering because of our absence from them, we now saw that others were made happy because of our presence here.

The food situation had, meanwhile, become increasingly worse as the bringing up of supplies became more difficult, and we were all in an underfed and famished condition. Raw vegetables, picked from the fields as we marched along, had been our main article of food for the past few days, and had been entirely insufficient to meet the large drain which the hardships and exertions we were daily going through were making on our physical system. Nevertheless, the following morning, November 7th, we were up at 5:30, and, without any breakfast, were soon on the road again, continuing our advance. At about

noon we went into position in a strip of woods northeast of Raucourt, where, in the rain, which was, as usual, falling, we pitched our tents and dug in. Nearby was a cemetery, originally dedicated by the French to their dead heroes, and subsequently similarly used by the Germans. There were several Boche graves recently filled and several others dug but unfilled, and in one of these Mechanic Price and Corporal Stuart established themselves for the night, thereby saving themselves much digging.

The Boche having been driven across the Mense River were now intrenched on the high hills beyond that stream, while on our left the outskirts of Sedan had been penetrated by American troops. Our own divisional objectives having been reached we were informed that the lines would be stabilized for a few days in order to repair lines of communication and bring up supplies for a further advance.

The rain and cold continued and when we awoke in the mornings our tents were covered with frost. The "canned heat" which some of us had salvaged helped a bit to heat the tents at night, and enabled us to crudely toast our bread. During the day, in the cover of the woods, we built wood fires and dried up some of our clothes. We continued to harass the enemy, and to be fired at by them, but we suffered no further casualties.

In the meantime Lieutenant Richard with his Pirate Piece and a crew of pirates, consisting this time of Sergeant Darling, Gleason, Van Buren, Burdick, Roth, Vincer, Graves and Panfil, had been doing very effective work in accelerating the enemy's retreat. They were in position now near the Mense at Autrecourt. Lieutenant Lunny, with Sergeant Ruggiero's gun-crew, went down to relieve them. On Sunday, November 10th, the spell of bad weather was broken by a beautiful, clear day. The warm sunshine which poured down on us now, instead of the cold rain, filled us with a feeling of joy and cheerfulness. About half past five that afternoon the battery was called upon to fire on a German dug-out that had been spotted by an infantry observer. After the first salvo had gone over, the infantry reported a direct hit on the target and we proceeded to let them have a few more rounds. From the official report this firing was the parting shot of the 152nd F. A. Brigade in the Great War. Thus we finished our part in the war with a "bull's-eye."

The enemy seemed to have ceased firing, and everything became quiet as we lolled about on the grass. Rumors reached us from a French anti-aircraft battery nearby that "La guerre efait finis" and it seemed to us that it would be fitting that peace should come on a day such as this. Of course, we were incredulous, yet we fostered the fond hope, and were disappointed when we turned in that night to hear the enemy's "coal barges" again sailing through the air.

The next day, Monday, November 11th, was a cloudy, wintry day, disagreeably different from yesterday, and when at breakfast the news was spread that an armistice would go into effect on the entire front at 11 o'clock we could not believe it possible. This news, however, was soon confirmed by Captain Mahon, and our joy knew no bounds. We built large bonfires and gronping around them, sang songs, and genuine happiness was written on every face. We had survived the worst, and felt that the hardships which Life could now offer us would be picayune in comparison. When the question





*Tom Price's bench—spot at which the firing battery celebrated Armistice Day.*

"Is everybody happy?" was yelled out by one group, "Yea ho!" was the full-hearted response. That afternoon some of us went to Raucourt to take a much-needed bath, and there, among the civilian population were scenes of the wildest rejoicing. French and American flags were floating from the houses and joy was on every face. The sun was now shining, and this earth certainly seemed a happy and beautiful place to live in. The philosopher who urged that this world was the best of all possible places would have found a mob of adherents, and poor Schopenhauer would have been shot at sunrise for his gloomy views. At night, some of us built large bonfires and gathered around and shouted and sang, while others stuck up candles on our helmets and by the light of these sat in our "pup" tents happily chatting or writing a few words to those at home. When we turned in that night it was with a sense of relaxation and freedom from burden such as we had not for a long time experienced. There were none of the usual terrifying and horrible noises; these were now but memories of the nightmare we had just lived through, while the future faced us bright and cheerful in outlook.

## Chapter XII.

### OUR LAST FRONT.

*November 12th to December 2nd.*



It has recently been reported by a prominent newspaper that a soldier had been found who stated that he enjoyed being under shell fire. Strange as this may sound, it is easily explainable, and is but an exaggeration of a very common reaction to the strain of the battlefront. When a man is under extreme danger his every sense and feeling is alert and super-sensitive. Every faculty he possesses is active and in full operation. He experiences for the time, a heightened intensity of feeling, and this, perhaps, explains why he is coolest and at his best at the moment of most critical danger. His attention is diverted away from his physical self and concentrated on the threatening danger and the means of averting it. The effect is very similar to that of a stimulant, and the reaction is also similar. When the moment of great danger has passed, the stimulus is removed and the high tension of feeling is slackened. His attention is again directed to himself and he again becomes actively conscious of his physical condition. Very often, when one of our men had been sent to the echelon for a few days' rest, after an extended stay at the front, the leisure, instead of benefiting him, usually resulted in his "going to pieces" there, and he only felt well again when he returned to the conditions of constant danger, activity and self-forgetfulness at the front.

Now, after the armistice was signed a similar reaction was noticeable on many. True, we enjoyed to the utmost the feeling that the hardships and horrors were ended, but physically we did not feel at our best. Though we enjoyed the relief from the big strain of our recent experiences still the stimulus which they offered was also gone and the effects of a lessened intensity of feeling were noticeable.

On the morning of November 12th, after a night which for many had been disturbed and sleepless because of the considerations just mentioned, we arose to another day of jubilation. As we washed and shaved, there was no longer the need of keeping our white towels under cover for fear that the enemy planes would see them. Camouflage was a thing of the past now for us, and to be able to move around and act without the usual precautionary measures was indeed a relief. Bonfires were again started and songs and shouts, as yesterday, filled the air. Word arrived at eleven o'clock that we would be relieved from the front that afternoon, and this added to our rejoicing. As usual, "Mike" Diehich and his staff of chefs were on the job for the occasion and had an excellent mess ready to add to the holiday feeling.

In the early afternoon, with the sun at its full strength, we pulled out through the town of Raucourt, still smiling over its restoration to freedom. We passed through the flooded streets of La Besace again and arrived at Sommanthe in the evening. The march was long and tiresome but our spirits were high, and we did not mind it. On the hike "Al" Murphy introduced the song that made him famous: "Those Little Red Drawers That My Dear Maggie Wore"; Bennie Freeman sang some of his favorite sentimental tunes and we all joined in on "The Old Gray Mare, She Ain't What She Used to Be."

We pitched camp on a cold and muddy strip of ground outside of Sommanthe and after thawing ourselves out at big bonfires turned in for the night. The next morning the real effects of the reaction mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this chapter became apparent. Most of the men were sick and in poor physical condition. The two days we spent here were far from enjoyable, especially for the cannoneers, for we were all back with the "dogs" now and they needed more grooming and attention than we ourselves got. In the evening of November 14th, after many conflicting rumors as to our joining the Army of Occupation or entraining for the coast had gone the rounds, orders arrived to leave our guns in their present position and move out with our horses. After a long hike we camped several kilometres beyond Beaumont, on the slope of a hill. It was past midnight and a cold wind was blowing. We pitched our tents and after piling everything we owned on top of us for warmth dropped off to sleep.

At 5 o'clock we were up again, ready to go forward to take over the guns of the 124th F. A. Our packs were loaded on a rickety salvaged German cart, and, with Walter F. Bang, from Iowa, driving, we started out toward "the front." In spite of our lack of sleep we were in excellent spirits, and, as we started out, were singing and cheering. Bang, with his usual pipe in the corner of his mouth, was ably manœvering the horse and cart, modestly acknowledging the "Three cheers for Bang!" which were being shouted out from time to time. Just then a heavy truck came along and striking the wheel in passing, brought horse, cart, Bang and pipe to the ground. None of these were injured, however, and after "Dan" Philpot had straightened out the axle, explaining to us that "this is the way yuh does it, min," we started forward again amid songs and cheers.

When we arrived at the position we found that it would be necessary to leave only a guard on the pieces. This was done and the rest of us returned in time to witness the event which, next to the cessation of hostilities, we had most earnestly prayed for. The "dogs" were being turned in, and we needed no better proof that the war was over. As McBride had often insisted, the war would never be over for us until we got rid of the "dogs," and when we saw all but twelve being turned over to the 15th F. A., who were going into Germany as part of the Army of Occupation, we shed no tears over their departure. Possibly Brozowski was an exception, for his pair of grays and he had become inseparable friends. He could not bear to think that they were once more going to be reduced to the regulation government ration, instead of the regular allowance plus all that Brozowski could "salvage" for them, which invariably doubled the quantity of their diet. Another war was thus also ended, that between the drivers and the cannoneers, and a second



*Battery D billets in Briquenay showing the former town hall in the centre.*

armistice was that day declared. Klesner, McCahill and Buckmiller were at this time also transferred to the 15th F. A.

The next few days were bitterly cold and snow flurries fell. The "pup" tents were very uncomfortable, and we were glad to move into a German prison-camp nearby where we could sleep under cover, with stoves ablaze. We remained here until November 19th, when we moved out, returning to Sommauthe. After two days there, this time in billets instead of "pup" tents, with fireplaces instead of bonfires, we hiked to the village of Briquenay, about seven kilometres distant.

Briquenay was a small village, long inhabited by the Germans, but now entirely deserted. The houses were almost all intact, and the furniture in them indicated that the Germans had been leading a comfortable life here. Electric lines were strung through the town, but were not now in operation. We were billeted in the town hall and in several adjoining houses. A few minutes after our arrival the men were seen scurrying in all directions collecting chairs and other articles of furniture, preparing to make their stay comfortable. A barrel of dill pickles, left behind by some other organization which had been billeted here, was "salvaged" and soon we were all walking around with pickles in our mouths. Several axes were found and some of us were soon chopping up logs for the large fireplaces which were in all of the billets. A short time after our arrival we were very comfortably installed in our new quarters, and sat in groups around the blazing fireplaces, enjoying what constituted luxurious living to us now.

The next few days we were engaged in salvage work, collecting the various articles scattered throughout the town belonging to the American Army, and sorting these out and placing them in separate piles. The town clerk, with several female civilians, arrived after an absence of four years and started to set what had been their homes in order. They drew supplies from our kitchen and were in other ways helped by our men. During our stay here we received another "delousing." The Germans had left an "Entlausung Station" nearby, and here we got a hot bath and a change of underwear, again ridding us of the "cootie," who had come back in large numbers since the last ablutions.

Another feature of our life in Briquenay was the non-commissioned officers' room. All of the non-commissioned officers gathered in one of the



*Guardhouse at Briquenay.*

rooms in the town hall, and here, of an evening, with the fireplace ablaze with large logs, many a spirited discussion took place. "Hank" Miller, who was recovering from his diarrhoea, became more argumentative than ever. He argued on every subject, from Birth Control to Booze, and claimed to be an expert on all. One night, when "Bob" Freedman had smuggled some cognac in, and "Hank" had smuggled some into his own system, he argued with more spirit than ever on the subject of Wilson and the League of Nations. Many a book and magazine flew through the air towards Glass, his implacable wordy enemy. "Hank" finally had to be put to bed, worsted in the argument, though, as usual, he did not admit it.

Some of the same cognac, together with a dozen bottles of Pomery, were smuggled up to the billets inhabited by Sergeants Agelfinger, Pons and Ronayne, Corporals Schapiro and McDonough and Chief Mechanic Philpot. "Dearie" Ronayne charged "Mac" with being a slacker. "Mac" retained "Sheppy" as his counsellor and "Shep" with his hair and moustache bristling straight up, and with much display of eloquence, argued the case for him. Philpot was appointed "jedge," because of his versatility and knowledge of all subjects, and after much eloquence and liquor had flowed forth, with much display of homely and practical wisdom, "Jedge" Philpot acquitted "Mac" of the charge.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 28th, Chaplain Howard delivered an excellent sermon in the village church. The band was on hand to liven up the occasion. The true spirit of Thanksgiving was everywhere present as we reviewed the events of the past several months and their fortunate outcome. Sergeant Dichich and Corporal Freedman had gone to Chalons by motor truck to make purchases for a Thanksgiving Dinner and they returned with a load of good things. The mess-hall, formerly the town hall, was decorated with ferns, holly and shrubbery, and then an excellent meal was served, consisting of roast lamb, mashed potatoes, salad, cocoa, nuts and red wine. Sergeant French made a gift of a large bar of chocolate to every man in the battery, thus adding to the holiday feeling. The occasion was felt by all to be one of deeper significance for us than any previous Thanksgiving Day.

On the morning of December 2nd we left Briquenay and hiked to Grandpre, seven kilometres away. Grandpre was in total ruins, hardly a building standing intact. The destructiveness of shell fire was more apparent here than in any of the many shelled towns we had passed through. Debris, dust



*American "side door" Pullman train.*

and dirt were piled up and scattered all around, and the town was the picture of desolation and ruin. There were very few civilians present, but the town was alive with American troops, who were busily engaged in salvage work. We had a hurried mess and then were loaded on to motor trucks and driven to Autrie, the railhead from which we were to entrain. Transportation not having yet appeared, we lodged ourselves in a German camp nearby and awaited its arrival. About 9 o'clock the train steamed in and by 10 o'clock we were loaded on American box cars, seventy to a car, ready to pull out. Where we were going we did not know, but we hoped that it was to the coast, from which we could sail for home.



*Battery Basket-Ball Team.*



*Group on trip to Brest.*

## Chapter XIII.

### LIGNEROLLES.

*December 3rd, 1918, to February 8th, 1919.*



ABOUT 4 o'clock in the morning of December 3rd we left the station at Autrie. The conditions on the box cars were as usual—a jumble of 70 bodies and 70 packs in a space which could comfortably hold only one quarter of that number. We were bunched together on the straw spread out in the cars and when a station was reached and we jumped off to stretch our legs we looked like real "Weary Willies," with our hair dishevelled, our caps setting on our heads at unusual angles and our clothes covered with wisps of straw. However, we were by this time accustomed to hardships and we considered this comfortable travelling. As we sat grouped around the doorways, or stood up looking through the slits on the side, it was pleasant to notice a slow but gradual return to the scenes and signs of civilization. The sight of even a civilian had become a rarity to us in our long stay in the devastated regions, and now, as the train passed through villages, towns and cities we saw women and children, open shops, busy streets and a variety of other commonplaces, which struck us with as much novelty as though we had never seen them before in our lives. What was customary in the life of a civilian had become out of the ordinary in our unusual method of life, and it was now a pleasing sensation to feel that we were returning to a more normal existence again.

At 4:30 P. M., we arrived at the station of Latrecey. It was raining, and as we detrained and unloaded our carriages and equipment by the light of a bonfire, the surrounding country had a desolate and dreary appearance, which was far from reassuring. We pulled the guns, caissons, G. S. carts, Fourgon wagons and water-wagon to a field nearby, placed them in some kind of order and then, shouldering our packs, hiked for some distance over railroad tracks to a large tin covered shed used as an aeroplane hangar, where we spread out our shelter halves and blankets and turned in for the night.

The following morning we hiked back over the railroad tracks again and

had an unsatisfactory "Canned Willie" breakfast. We then started on a long hike, in a drizzling rain, over muddy roads and arrived at last in the afternoon at the village of Lignerolles. Part of the battery was housed in a barrack while the rest occupied the available lofts and cowsheds which were usually assigned to the "Americain soldat" as billets.

Lignerolles was our home for the next ten weeks. It was a small village with a population of 144. The houses were grouped around the village church which stood facing the Aubette River. The town was neatly laid out and was much cleaner than the average French village we had seen. Another important feature was the presence of two "gin-mills" where the "necessities" of a soldier's life were dispensed. The village also boasted a schoolhouse, where two demure and pretty schoolmistresses resided, a travelling pastor, who visited the church and helped the boys smoke their cigarettes, and a graveyard containing the sacred remnants of the inhabitants of Lignerolles for several generations past. There was, in addition to this, in the village, one cow, a few chickens, a few more rabbits and a large reserve of "pommes de terres," which lasted throughout the next ten weeks and afforded the basis of many a "potato party."

A "potato party" is a form of entertainment and nourishment peculiar to France and the A. E. F. In every village where troops are billeted there are many French families who own a stove, a frying-pan and a supply of potatoes, and are kindly disposed towards the American soldier and his francs. In the evening, after the soldier has finished his day's work, and his three "squares" he usually gathers in these houses, sits at the table under candle light, with his mess-kit in front of him, feeds the old man with Bull Durham and "ready-mades," and partakes of dish after dish of delicately greased "pommes de terres frites" at one franc, or thereabouts, a throw, as a light dish before retiring.

This was the way that many of the men spent their evenings at Lignerolles. "Greaseball" Kory, "Micky" Mara, Rocco Manzo, Phil Foster, McBride, "Barney" Gilmour and most of the other privates, as well as the more elite sergeants and corporals, spent evening after evening in the different houses of the town, eating potatoes and discussing the possibility of getting home "Toot Sweet." Bugler Wagner was a steady caller at one of these houses, and it was rumored that it was not only the potatoes that drew him there, but also the winning charms of Mademoiselle Ninny, called, for short, "Skull and Crossbones."

In addition to "potato parties" there were also "booze parties" nightly. These took place at the two gin-mills, one of which was presided over by the feminine charms of Mademoiselle Madeleine, while the other by the rival charms of Yvnette. Madeleine was of the long, thin variety of female, and wore fashionable clothes—even silk hose. Van Auken became enamoured of the young lady and thus became one of the best customers and consumers at that "gin-mill." Yvnette, the presiding goddess at the other, was of the short, chubby variety and was admitted by everyone to be "pleasingly plump." Goodman developed a soft spot in his heart for her, and was a regular visitor there until Sergeant Mayer arrived from the Officers' Training Camp and captured the young lady with his polished manners and finger-nails and his excellent



French. It can readily be seen that with two such charming young ladies in charge of the two rival "gin-mills" many a discussion would arise as to their comparative beauty and virtues. Many a spirited argument took place on the subject. Meanwhile Madeleine and Yvonne continued to dispense pleasing beverages, not realizing that they were the subject of so much of the conversation.

This was not the only form of discussion that took place, however. A debate was arranged on the subject, "Are you in favor of a League of Nations?" and it took place one Saturday afternoon in the barracks. "Hank" Miller, "Cognac" Lowell, Joachim Simas and Noxon supported the affirmative, while Schapiro, Petchtle, Lambé and Glass represented the negative. "Hank," with an expression of suspense and pain which outrivalled even his facial contortions when his usual malady held him in its fatal grip, delivered a carefully prepared address on the virtues of permanent peace and then sat down with a sigh of relief, such as Atlas would utter were the weight of the earth to be removed from his shoulders. Joachim supported him with a learned discourse, during which he quoted every Portuguese philosopher from the days of antiquity down to and including himself. Noxon, with his usual emphatic and "take-it-from-me" manner lent his support, as did also Lowell, and it looked dark for the negative after these speakers had finished. On the negative, "Peck" delivered a masterly oration, followed by Lambé, who expressed his forceful opinions on the question of allowing Chinamen to have a say in the ruling of Ireland. Then "Sheppy" took the floor, and he took the audience too. With hair dishevelled and standing on end, with his little moustache bristling at an angle of 90 degrees from his lip, he delivered a scathing address in which he flayed unmercifully "Hank" and the other "academic gentlemen" who had supported him. When he had finished he was loudly applauded and the verdict was given to the negative.

In the early part of December the first furloughs were issued to the men. Chief Mechanic Philpot, Sergeants Osterman, Lowell, Darling and Aigeltinger, Corporals Glass and McDonough and Private Petchtle left for Aix-les-Bains, where they lived in high style at a modern hotel, forgetting for the time everything military. The rest of the battery were not so fortunate, however, for day after day they had to go through the monotonous close order drill, gun drill, wig-wag and semaphore practice and a variety of other exercises, most of which had proved to be useless at the front, but were, however, a good means of "killing" time and making the Army distasteful now. Our afternoons were usually spent in some field problem or maneuver which was as dull and uninteresting as everything else military had now become. The break in the monotony came on Sunday, when we started the day by going to church and ended it up by visiting one of the local "gin-mills" and beating up or being beaten up by one of our good comrades. "Micky" Mara and "Paddy" Curran were two such pals and, one Sunday eve, in true Irish and Christian style pummelled each other, with the result that "Paddy" sported a pair of eyes which, for variety of coloring, had the rainbow beaten all hollow.

On Saturdays we usually hiked to the neighboring town of Aubepierre where the 1st Battalion was stationed and there marched in review before Colonel Enos. The hike to Aubepierre was a long and hard one, over many

a steep hill, and it was considered a stroke of good fortune to be able to escape taking it. "Bennie" Freeman, who for some time past had been fattening himself on rabbits, chickens and the usual onions, was not in condition to do any vigorous hiking, so, one Saturday morning, he decided that instead of hiking to Aubepierre he would betake himself to the infirmary nearby under the pretext that he was sick. He communicated this plan to "Teddy" Hecht, "Froggie" Courchene, "Blondie" Aske and others of his friends who were also experts at "ducking" formations, at the same time expressing the hope that he would not be given any salts at the infirmary, the taste and effects of which were not the most pleasant. Sergeant Lowell overheard this conversation and slipping out of the door, hurried to the infirmary. He apprised Robinson, who was on duty there, of the scheme which was on foot, and then hurried back in time to turn "Bennie's" name in on sick-call. When the bugle blew, "Bennie" turned out and went up to the infirmary. With a very pained expression he told Lieutenant McCaleb of his sufferings, and the Lieutenant gave him a very careful examination. After feeling his pulse and taking his temperature, he advised "Bennie" that he was in a very serious condition, and that the best medicine for him was a double dose of salts. This was prepared, and with a very wry face, "Bennie" had to swallow it. He suffered for the rest of the day and night, but the salts were found to be an effective cure for his ailment, for the next Saturday he hiked to Aubepierre.

On Christmas Day a large consignment of turkeys arrived, purchased with funds sent over by the 304th F. A. Association. The turkeys were, however, fouler than eatable fowls should be, with the result that they had to be consigned to the refuse can. The day lacked the usual good cheer of Christmas, as did also New Year's Day. The only place the men could stay with any degree of comfort was in the "gin-mills" and these had none of the home-like holiday amusements.

On New Year's Eve, after "Taps" had blown, a long procession, headed by "Pop" Munday, who, as Van Buren expressed it, was rather "pifflated," filed out of the "gin-mills" and marched to the officers' quarters, where they raised a tremendous din by beating their mess-kits together. They continued this noise for some time, and, finally, after Major Devereux had opened his window and wished them a "Happy New Year," dispersed and climbed up the ladders to their billets. This was a difficult feat for some, but, with the aid of their more sober comrades they, at last, all made it, without anyone landing in the guardhouse for the night.

The guardhouse was a rather rickety building, with a stone floored room containing a large fireplace downstairs, and two bare rooms with broken windows and floors upstairs. The guard consisted of sixteen privates, three corporals and two sergeants. In the smoky atmosphere of the room downstairs these men gathered, when off post, reading, writing letters, playing cards or preparing something tasty to eat, such as an onion sandwich, French fried potatoes, or some "flapjacks." During the wee small hour of the night, while the rest of the village was resting from its daily toils, the guardhouse was usually full of activity, as the men engaged themselves in these various occupations, to the tuneful accompaniment of the snoring of some of the men who had dropped off for a short restful nap on the stone floor. During the day



*Battery Soccer Team.*

the most desirable posts were Nos. 2 and 4, the two "gin-mills." The guard there was a sort of official taster, called in from time to time to sample every newly opened bottle, and these posts usually fell to the lot of men who were experienced and competent enough to pass judgment, such as Nihan, Gleason, Brotz, Cullinane and Russell. At night the most desirable post was No. 5, the kitchen. Here, the guard picked for himself the most juicy steaks and choice foods and spent his nightly vigil sampling the next day's rations.

In addition to their General Orders the guards also had several special orders prescribed by themselves. Special Order No. 1 provided that the guard "salvage" enough wood from the French woodpiles to keep the fire going all night. Special Order No. 2 was for the kitchen guard only, and provided that he bring back enough steaks to feed the rest of the guard. It was difficult for some of the men to learn their general and special orders, as they could not read English. Brozowski was one who had difficulty in this direction; but he demonstrated that he had a very practical understanding of his duties. One night, while on guard at No. 4 "gin-mill," Lieutenant Lummy, who was officer of the day, approached and walked by without being challenged. He came back to Brozowski and asked him why he had not challenged him when he saw him approaching. "For why should I ask the Lieutenant 'Who goes there?' when I see who it is?" asked Brozowski. This logic was irrefutable, so the Lieutenant passed on.

In the early part of January, a Y. M. C. A. hut was established in the basement of the schoolhouse and a female Y. M. C. A. worker arrived to sell us biscuits, jam and other sweetmeats. The schoolhouse proper was also opened up in the evenings and classes were conducted there. Corporal Schapiro conducted a class in Commercial Arithmetic, Sergeant Kroeger of E Bat-

tery a class in Elementary English, Corporal Glass, one in Advanced English, while Lieutenant Richard delivered two lectures each week on the World War and its historical background, and Major Devereux lectured on our campaigns. Shows were also staged several times a week, to which Batteries D and E both contributed their local talent. A boxing-bout was arranged between Gaylord P. Bailey, the "Iowa Cyclone," and Elmer J. Brotz, the "Buffalo Whirlwind," but when the time arrived both of these pugilists, having been patronizing Yvettette's bar for some time, were not in condition to fight.

In the meantime, our schedule had been changed providing for the use of the afternoons in athletics. When the call for afternoon drill blew we lined up and marched to the athletic field nearby, where we spent the afternoon playing baseball, track games and soccer. Lambe had developed an excellent soccer team, made up of such nimble athletes as Schapiro, Barrett, Bowler, Walsh, Crean, Woods, Dyer, Hecht, Lambe, Foster, Sagman, Culliton, Croy, Philpot, Roth and Van Buren, and the combinations were strong enough to beat every team in the regiment. The betting on the games was heavy and as we lost none of them, the francs of most of the men were being multiplied, as was also, in consequence, the income of the gin-mills.

The second group of "permissionaires" left for Challes-les-Eaux, after the first group returned. The fortunate ones this time were Sergeant French, Corporals Miller, Schlosser, Schwab, Barger, Levins and Pvt. Gleason. Captain Mahon and Lieutenant Daniels, who had also been away on furloughs, returned and relieved Lieutenants Richard and Lunny, who paid a visit to the balmy Riviera.

On Sunday, January 5th, we marched to Anbepierre, where the entire regiment was assembled for a Memorial Service in memory of the men we had lost in action. After a brief address by Colonel Enos, Chaplain Howard delivered a splendid sermon in praise of these dead. The band played appropriate music and the entire regiment joined in prayer.

The following Sunday we again hiked to Anbepierre, but this time for a different purpose. We were to be "deloused" again. We packed up all our equipment, both issued and personal, in the bedsacks and loaded them on a wagon to be carried to Anbepierre. On arrival we each took our pack, and, in our turn, entered a house adjoining the bathhouse. Here we stripped off all of our clothes and put these also into the bedsacks. They were then taken out to a sterilizing machine outside, while we, covered by a blanket provided for the occasion, went into the bathhouse for a hot shower. By the time we had completed the bath, the bed sacks and their contents had been sterilized and were awaiting us in another room. Although still steaming hot they dried out before we were completely dressed. We then marched back to Lignerolles, much cleaner than when we had left and this time effectively separated from the hateful "cootie."

This was the first of a series of steps taken in preparation for our moving and entering the Le Mans Area. On January 25th our guns were taken away by the tractor, and that was the last we saw of them. Sidearms, signal equipment and telephone lines were also turned in. Realizing that moving was now only a matter of days we eagerly looked forward to our departure, for the stay at Lignerolles had been dull and monotonous. We held daily practice



*On the way to Brest.*

marches with packs in training for the 9-kilometre hike to Latrecey, which we would have to make when the moving orders arrived. A snow had fallen at about this time, covering the roads with a slippery coating and making it difficult to retain one's balance. This became even more precarious when a snowball barrage started coming over from the rear of the column. Those in the front, however, had their revenge when after a halt they about-faced and pelted the former offenders unmercifully. Nor did everyone escape without injuries from these battles, for Sergeant Ronayne and Corporal Glass carried with them on their eyes for many days thereafter the scars of honorable snowball warfare.


The snow had completely transformed the appearance of the surrounding country with its white blanket. The tracks of game in the snow had brought out all the hunters of the neighborhood, and it was a common sight to see a Frenchman dragging a wild boar or a deer back from the chase. An old snowplow which was found in the village, was rigged up by the men and much sport was had running it through the streets to clear away the snow. A few brave ones stood on the plow as it drove along while the rest of us lined up on the side and pelted them with snowballs.

With the snow had come a siege of very cold weather and when February 8th, the day set for our moving, arrived, we were in the midst of the only bitter cold snap we endured in France. A biting wind was blowing, which made progress with our heavy packs up the long hills and over the slippery roads to Latrecey slow and difficult. After two hours of this tiresome hiking we arrived at our destination and stopped at a Y. M. C. A. hut, where we were served with a cup of hot chocolate and a jam sandwich. We then took shelter from the wind in a barn near the railroad tracks, where we awaited the arrival of our train. The "40 Hommes" and "8 Chevaux" type of French box cars finally arrived and at 5 o'clock we piled in on the straw covering the floor, anticipating an unpleasant journey.

## Chapter XIV.

### THE LE MANS AREA AND BREST.

*February 9, 1919, to April 20, 1919.*

HE journey we now started on was by far the most disagreeable we had yet experienced. With no explained reason for conditions which showed criminal lack of provision for the men, we were huddled together, in zero weather, in cold, bare box cars, forty to a car. Our provisions for the trip, consisting of bread, and canned corned beef and beans, were piled up in the center of the car. A latrine-can was placed nearby and a lister bag was hung overhead. We were so closely jammed together that it was even impossible to get up for our "grub," so we sat, ate and tried to sleep in the same spot. Straw was strewn over the floor and added to the dirt and filth.

The beans and canned corned beef froze and turned sour, and the water froze in our canteens. The trip was miserable from beginning to end, and in every detail. When we jumped off at a station and sought to buy some sandwiches which were on sale there, we were informed by the guard who had been placed there that the sandwiches were "for officers only." What wonder then that the attitude of the men as expressed by them was that the next war would be "for officers only"?

There has been much criticism, chiefly to further partisan political purposes, of the army, its officers and its management. Most of this has been entirely unjustified, but here was a case where the neglect shown by the military authorities was indeed blameworthy. There was not the slightest indication that the comfort of the men had been given the smallest consideration.

As a direct result of these conditions, thirty-nine men from our own battery were sent to the hospital with "Spanish Influenza," the first cases which we had. Battery F sent eighty to the hospital. Cook Schwartz was taken from the train in an ambulance. Boom was sent away with pneumonia and died. The loss of this fine soldier and comrade was much to be regretted especially after the active fighting was over.

After two days and nights of this misery, we arrived at the town of La Suze at 5 A. M., of February 11th, and detrained there. We enjoyed a cup of coffee and some bisnits at the Y. M. C. A. and then hiked for four and one-half kilos to the Chateau Bussouiere, near the village of Fercé. We marched through a long walk, lined with overhanging evergreens to the chateau and its adjoining buildings. Our billets consisted of ancient lofts, inhabited by



*Battery Baseball Team.*

"Americans soldiers" on the second floor, and cows, pigs and donkeys on the first floor.

For the next six weeks we led a dull, uninteresting and purposeless existence here. The inspections of every possible kind, and the reviews by General Pershing, General Alexander and General Glassford failed to stimulate our imagination and interest to any great extent. We spent the mornings in some form of work, such as gas-mask drill and wig-wag and semaphore drill, the relation of which to our return to civil life and duties we failed to see. In the afternoons, we engaged in athletics on an excellent athletic field, adjoining the billets, and this we really enjoyed, when the weather was clear, which was very rarely.

In the evenings, we either walked to the Y. M. C. A. in the nearby village, where Newberry always had some excellent rumors in the way of "morale builders" to hand out, or we gathered in the billets and listened to some stirring address by "Jim" Coffey or Henry Mann on the subject, "Get the boys home 'toot sweet.'" Jim, with much show of eloquence would quote Champ Clark, Jim Jeffries and other of his favorite statesmen, while Henry, together with "Willie" Farrell, Joe Hodel and other such Bolsheviks helped him along. When the weather permitted "Speech" McDonough would take his place on the small platform at the head of the stairway leading into the billets and overlooking the muddy courtyard below, and would commence to harangue the angry mob below, with much gesture and expression. When the mob was held spellbound by his oratory, Yvonne, the buxom milkmaid of the chateau, usually appeared with her herd of cows, who immediately began to "boo!" "Mac's" speech. This was the signal for "boo's" on the part of everybody, and Mac had to retire.

A new schedule of calls had arrived, and we were now getting up as late as 7 A. M. Wagner, Farren and Smith had been "practising" with the bugle for a long time, as we well knew, and now they were requisitioned into service as full-fledged buglers. They had their own way of blowing calls, however, and it would have taken a telepathist to discover what call was being blown at a particular time. The sound of the first note of the bugle was the signal for innumerable cat-calls and hoots from every corner of the billets, forming a medley that could have rivalled the sounds of a menagerie.

On March 17, St. Patrick's day, we gathered in the grounds surrounding the chateau, dressed in our best, and had our pictures taken. A diminutive photographer from La Suze took charge of the ceremonies, and his wife assisted him. With much "kidding" from the other platoons, each platoon was taken separately. The drivers, cannoneers and special details were also taken separately. The result was the "fine body of men" pictured in the photographs in this volume.

On March 21st, after one of the many field inspections we had been having, in which we had to lay out every article of our equipment, we emptied our bed-sacks, rolled our packs, picked up the rifles which had now been issued to us, and hiked to La Suze, where we were billeted in the barracks at the Holding Camp. We had been scheduled to sail from France in the early part of April, and we thought that this was simply a move to the railroad to be ready to entrain. The news, however, soon spread that our moving had again been postponed, this time until April 28th. This had a very discouraging and depressing effect on the men, and their morale was lower than it ever had been. To make matters worse, there were plenty of details handed out daily, for work in La Suze, which the men did not take very kindly to.

They drowned their troubles, however, every night at the gin-mill where Georgette and Martha were the presiding goddesses. Here, "dez woofs" were fried in large numbers, and wine, beer and every other beverage, excepting water, were poured out in large quantities. The M. P.'s closed the place at 8:30 P. M., and they had a hard time getting everybody out. Weissberger, who was partaking freely, was among the most noisy and obdurate, with the result that he landed in the guardhouse, and it took all the influence of Sergeant French to get him out.

At about this time, "Hank" Miller and "Red" Harknett left on furlough, to retrace their steps over the front and bring back photographs for the volume. After a wild time in Paris, they reached Fer-en-Tardenois and ventured forth with a few loaves of bread and a couple of "hunks" of bologna. They fell in with some grave-diggers who were the fortunate possessors of many bottles of champagne, and "Hank" and "Red" bearing in mind that July 1st was approaching, imbibed. The result was that they were put to bed, entirely oblivious of their mission. They sobered up, however, in time to bring back an excellent collection of photographs, some of which are published in this volume.

In the early part of April we started making preparations for moving. Equipment was being daily called in and inspections were being held very often. We "got the needle" again, were examined for "cooties," had a thermometer stuck in our mouths and were then declared physically and morally





*In full packs at Brest.*



*At Camp Ponteczen, Brest—  
"Old lady" Jonas in foreground.*

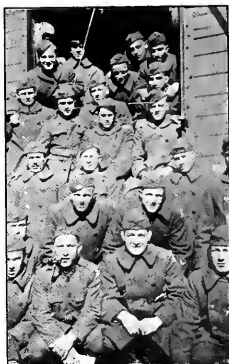
fit for embarkation and return to our families. The bright spot in our stay here was the production of the regimental show, "Oh, Oh, Mademoiselle," in which Grandin, Pons and Farren starred.

Early in the morning of April 17, the bugle blew, calling us to our final train trip in France. We got on the trains nearby and left La Suze at 6:30. This time we were quartered in large American box cars, fifty-six to a car. Conditions were much more comfortable than on our last trip, and this, together with the fact that we were definitely heading for home, raised our spirits to the highest point. Mess was served to each car from a Q. M. C. kitchen-car, and was much better "chow" than we had received on any of our previous train rides.

We arrived at Brest very early next morning. The sight of the harbor under the full moon, with the many boats anchored there, was certainly a welcome one. After getting some mess at a very sanitary and efficiently handled mess-hall, we again hiked slowly up the same hill, which almost a year ago we had climbed when first setting foot on France. The signs on the "gin-mills" had been changed from "Commerce de Vin" to "Modern Bar," one of the many indications of Americanization which were visible everywhere. It was enjoyable to look over the sights, feeling that it was the last lap in our adventures where a year ago it had been the first.

The camp had been organized on a gigantic scale, and accommodations were found for us without any difficulty. We were assigned to comfortable squad-tents, six men to a tent. Two extra blankets were issued to every man and wood was provided for the stoves in the tents. The next two days were spent in every imaginable kind of inspection. We were again thoroughly deloused and received new clothing where it was needed. Our French money was exchanged for American. There was continual activity, and we were kept on the jump every minute of the time.

On Sunday, April 20, after we had gathered for a regimental religious service, word arrived that we were to immediately leave for our ship. This announcement caused the greatest joy, and with laughter and cheers we went about policing the area and rolling our packs with a vim. After a very hot hike through Brest, we arrived at a pier where the Red Cross served us with

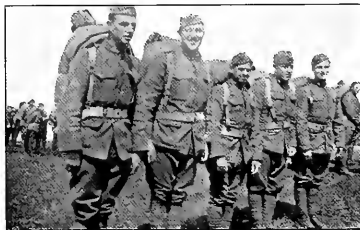


*Stopping enroute—"Five minutes rest."*

coffee and buns. We then hiked to a near-by wharf, where, with much expedition, we loaded the baggage of the entire brigade into motor cars. When this work was finished, we hiked to another pier and loaded the same baggage on to a lighter. Our names were then checked from a roster, and we left the shores of France by sliding down a baggage chute on our packs into the lighter.

We slowly pulled away from shore towards the steamer "Agamemnon," which we boarded by climbing up a rope ladder. Here, again, the duty fell to us of unloading the baggage, from the lighter on to the steamer, and it was not until nine o'clock that we were finished. Though much fatigued and worn out we were working with spirit and eagerness.

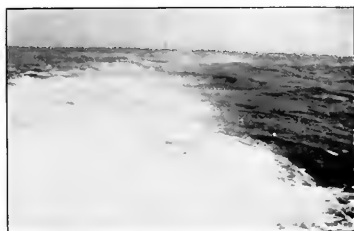
We were assigned to wire bunks on "A" deck, port side, and after depositing our belongings on the bunks we went down to the mess-hall below and had some sausages and rice-pudding for supper. We then retired, expecting to be well away from France before sunrise.



*"Prepare for Inspection" No. 9989.*



*On baggage lighter at Brest, April, 1919.*



*Homeward bound—"Goodbye, France!"*

## Chapter XV.

### HOMEWARD BOUND.

*April 21, 1919, to May 10, 1919.*



WHEN we awoke the next morning, we were disappointed to find ourselves still at our moorings in the harbor. The anchors were not raised until 12:30. With joyful emotion we lined up on deck watching the receding shores of France. The weather was ideal and for the rest of the day we basked in the sun and relaxed. It was hard to believe that we were at last actually on our way.

The meals were very poor and were served in a filthy mess-hall. The German origin of the vessel probably explained why we were being served bologna and sausages three times a day. One organization, however, was fortunate enough to get ice-cream and cake one afternoon for the uniform arrangement of their dubbin can covers. The Troop Commander who had made an inspection of quarters had issued a general order with the usual red tape and verbiage accompanying it, promising a reward of ice cream and cake to the organization having the best arrangement of bunks. And, further showing his excellent understanding of the psychology of the men he threatened that the organization being responsible for the throwing of papers on deck would be deprived of their supper. The general was the youngest brigadier in the U. S. Army.

The eight days at sea were uneventful and even uninteresting. We missed the spontaneity of feeling which we had experienced on our trip across. We seemed more callous and less susceptible to new impressions. On our first trip, it had seemed so strange and novel to suddenly find ourselves on the high seas, sailing we knew not where. Since then we had been thrust into so many strange and unexpected situations that nothing any longer appealed to us with novelty.

On the morning of April 29th, after an early breakfast, we rolled our packs preparatory to disembarking. We were stationed by organizations on the several decks with our guidons open and flowing in the breeze. When land

was first sighted, we set up a yell and a cheer. The land became more and more clearly visible. River craft became more numerous as we came nearer and nearer to shores which were so familiar to us. And then many ferryboats, marked "Mayor's Committee of Welcome" and tugs approached with bands playing, and men and women cheering and growing almost hysterical in the excitement. We were overwhelmed with emotion. The bands on the "Agamemnon" were all playing, and everywhere were laughter, cheers and joyful sounds.

We docked at a pier in Hoboken, and as we got off the gangplank, friends were thronging around the gates shouting and cheering and looking for familiar faces. The Red Cross, K. of C. and Y. M. C. A. overwhelmed us with fruit, candy, cake, cigarettes and other dainties which had not been plentiful in France. There it had always been "Gimme," "Let me have" and "Have you got?"; here they handed us freely more than we could carry.

After an excellent dinner, we boarded the ferryboat "Hempstead" and headed for Long Island City. There we received another enthusiastic reception. The very large crowds which had gathered there were held in check by the police. Bands were playing and shouts of recognition, welcome and joy were heard everywhere. We then marched to the trains nearby and boarded comfortable electric trains, which whirled us in speed and comfort to Camp Mills. How different from the box cars, on which but a few weeks earlier we had been riding!

Upon arrival in camp, we were assigned to squad tents, where we quickly made ourselves comfortable. We were a happy and enthusiastic lot and life meant more to us now back in "God's Own Country." Telegrams, letters and telephone messages arrived and before long everyone was in touch with his friends and family. For the next few days, day and night, we were busy being de-loused, equipped and inspected. After the de-lousing, the New York City men were allowed home on pass. The discharge papers were being prepared and the officers were kept continuously busy on the paper work. Mayer and Grandin were assisting in this task, as they had just received their belated commissions.

On Monday, May 5, we made up our packs and boarded trains for New York. When we arrived there we were quartered in the 69th Regt. Armory, 26th Street and Lexington Avenue, awaiting the parade the next day. As soon as we had made up our packs for the parade, we were dismissed for the rest of the day. In the evening, we had a very enjoyable banquet in the Hotel McAlpin, thanks to our Battery Fund and Sergeant Diebich's untiring work. There was much music and entertainment provided and everyone had a fine time.

The following morning we lined up at nine o'clock and formed on one of the side streets for the parade, which started at ten. The streets were thronged with people who were kept in check by the police. They were treating us like spoiled children, handing us every possible kind of sweets. The buildings were gaily decorated and everybody was dressed in their cleanest and best "duds." It was an officially declared holiday and the city had turned out to do honor to "New York's Own."

We marched in four parallel columns of squads up Fifth Avenue, with bands playing and people cheering and yelling. Grandstands had been built on the side of the streets, but these could not accommodate the large crowds which had turned out. At corners, the police had all they could do to keep back the crowds which had gathered there. After this triumphal march, we were dismissed for the day. The following morning, we gathered at the Armory, made up our packs and then entrained for Camp Upton, where during our stay of the next three days, the final touches were put on the demobilization work.

On May 10th, 1919, after a night which we had spent in playing pranks on each other, we marched in the heavy rain to the Q. M. C. office, where after much delay we received our pay, our bonus and our railroad tickets. We then marched to the station, and as we passed through the gate and shook hands with Lieutenant Richard and Lieutenant Mann, we at last received our discharges. We were again free men, entitled to the rights and privileges of democracy which we had lost in fighting for it. Once more we were free agents with control over our own actions and method of life.

On the train, we were wild with joy. We shook hands with each other and wished each other luck. And when we pulled into the station, we shook hands with the many comrades whom we would probably never see again. Fate had thrown us together for many months and now Fate was parting us. It was sad for many to leave friends who had shown their mettle as men and as friends on more than one occasion. We exchanged addresses and parted, each going his own way. What had once been Battery D, 304th F. A., was now but a memory to its members, scattered through every state in the Union.

## AN INSIGHT INTO A DRIVER'S LIFE.



N the afternoon of September 4th, with a fourgon wagon loaded with rations, we left the peace and security of the Nesle Woods, in the Vesle sector, headed for the gun position some four kilos up front. The weather was fine and warm, and everything was exceptionally quiet, or appeared so to us who had travelled this same road but 10 hours before to the music of bursting shells, the whirr of the Boche planes, and the occasional explosion of a bomb. Arriving at the gun position we found everybody in great excitement and jubilation. The Boche were falling back, and orders had come for a general advance—our first important one. Runners had been sent to the echelon for the horses, telephone wires had been pulled in, guns taken out of position and Sergeant Dichich was distributing "iron rations" with a liberal hand.

After dumping the rations we loaded up with extra G. I. cans, and other kitchen utensils that could not be carried on a rapid march, with which we started back for the echelon. By this time news of the advance had been received in the rear and the countryside was swarming with men and horses. Column after column of infantry crept along in the shelter of the woods. Horse-drawn limbers and motor-trucks crowded the roads. Everyone was hurrying forward in pursuit of the Huns. About halfway back we met Sergeant French in charge of our own horses, and he without any further ceremony salvaged my lead team, leaving me to make my way back alone and with but a single pair to draw the G. S. wagon.

I eventually arrived, however, and found everything in even greater excitement than at the gun position. Everybody was working—an uncommon sight at the echelon. Sergeant Pons was endeavoring to put two sacks of grain where only one should be. Sergeant Von Pless was folding blankets, loading hay, piling up harness and issuing orders in double-quick time. Sergeant Munday, busily engaged in directing the policing of the picket line, found time to locate one or two loafers and set them to work; while Vincier, with a most rueful expression on his cheery countenance sat regarding a huge black stallion whose forelegs, bandaged to the knees, were comfortably placed in a huge tub of water. He was wondering, no doubt, how such an enormous useless bulk could be transported most easily across the long and weary marches to Berlin.

My outfit was at once commandeered by Sergeant Clackner, the wagon backed up to the supply shack, and Propp, ably assisted by a few extra men, sent over a normal barrage of old shoes, overcoats, shovels, underwear, hats, and most anything he could lay his hands on. This conglomeration of the non-essentials of victorious warfare we hauled to the Supply Company dump and turned over to the solicitous care of Rocco Manzo, who spent many an easy day in profound contemplation of their beauty.

Between these trips to the Supply Company, and when the sergeant's back was turned, I ate my bread and beans, struck my tent, made my pack, and instructed Otto Nelson, the original McNutt, in the complicated and difficult task of arranging and adjusting a set of No. 1 French harness to a



*The "advanced" echelon in the ravine near Pert s.*

pair of No. 3 horses. The aforementioned Boob had been up to this time attached to the guns, and in the emergency was now promoted to the position of driver. Many a half hour I spent explaining to him the nigh and the off side, the hocks and the dock and the other niceties of a driver's life. He was an apt pupil, however, and soon learned the art of disappearing when a call came for a team to go out at night.

By 9 o'clock everything seemed ready and a last inspection of the camp revealed a dozen cannoneers peacefully slumbering with their heads on their packs, as usual enjoying life to the full. After arousing these knights of war to the stern realities of the driver's nightly life, we set out, only to be stopped, after advancing a kilometer or so, by a message from the Captain ordering us to encamp until morning.

Pulling up close to the woods we tied our horses to the wagons, and slept under the trees. At the first break of day we again set out, and, after advancing several kilometres, we went into camp to await orders from the firing battery. During this wait we spent our leisure hours in the usual pastime of grooming by the numbers, from the hocks down, leading horses miles to water, cleaning harness and polishing up as if for a parade on Fifth Avenue, while the cannoneers, poor fellows, policed the picket lines and dug the latrines.

The next day word came to move forward again as the enemy had taken up a position along the Aisne River. We started at noon and had much difficulty in pulling the heavily loaded wagons through the mud and ruts of the wooded road. Time and again we would have to double up to draw the wagons across some particularly bad spot. Once out of the woods, however, the journey was easy, down the long slope and across the Vesle valley.

strewn with the decomposed bodies of both German and American soldiers. We encamped on the side of the hill near Bazoches, where the echelon remained for several days.

Up to this time it was customary to picket all the horses at the echelon, but now it was considered advisable to keep a sufficient number to pull the guns and ammunition within easy reach of the emplacement, thus dividing the battery into three parts; the gun emplacement at the front, the echelon at the rear, and the picket line between the two. I was directed to join the picket line near Perles on the following morning.

It was located in a deep gully, and I would have passed it by had I not seen my old friend Brozowski coming around a clump of bushes with a couple of feed-bags over his shoulder. I knew at once that the horses were nearby and also that neither Sergeant Von Pless nor Corporal Schwab were within hailing distance, otherwise "George" and "Charlie" would not be about to partake of this additional afternoon ration. Brozowski's husky pair of dappled greys enjoyed many a "salvaged" feed and thus continuously gained weight, even at the front. They were also famous for their nasty habit of sitting on the breeching-strap, which caused the early evacuation of more than one lead pair. But Brozowski loved them with all his heart, and would not have parted with them for anything—no, not even in return for a redeemed Poland. The accommodations at this place were limited, but I was fortunate enough to find room on the ground floor of the rude shack which served as a stable, with Hawley, Allard, Russell and one or two stragglers. Directly above us Fuller, Gilmore and Cain were quartered on the side of the hill, and the other drivers occupied the opposite bank. At dusk that evening the old familiar litany of Sergeant Von Pless rang out: "Bradshaw, Fisher and O'Brien haul ammunition—also Carlsen, Bowler and Peterson, Corporal Schwab in charge."

We pulled out just as a severe thunderstorm was breaking. The darkness was intense. The road was in a fearful condition with mud and shell-holes. The rain fell in torrents, while the sharp crash of thunder and the dull ominous roar of bursting shells rolled and reverberated through the valley bearing their message of danger and striking terror to the hearts of the stoutest. Occasionally a flare from the trenches on our right lit up the sky, causing us to halt until the light flickered out. We advanced about 200 yards in this manner when suddenly the off wheels of the wagon dropped down to the bottom of a huge shell-hole about six feet deep, filled almost to the top with mud and water. The 200 rounds of explosives with which the cart was loaded were scattered in all directions, some at the bottom of the hole and others in a bunch of thorn bushes some 20 feet away. By the time we had the wagon righted and the shells fished out of the mud and thorns the storm had cleared and a pale sickly moon shed a faint light over the rain-soaked fields. We continued on our journey only to meet with a really dangerous situation.

We had reached the top of the hill, from which the gun position was located some 800 yards down the slope and a little to our left. As we stopped to rest our horses, after the long pull up the hill, a shell burst about 400 yards down the slope and a short distance to our right. This was followed by another and still another, in about half minute intervals. We all knew what



that meant. "Jerry" was sending over one of his sweeping bursts of fire, covering the whole hill from right to left and back again. If he would not increase his range we might be all right. We could, of course, pull back down the hill and be in comparative safety. But every yard gained on such a road counted, and the guns were sorely in need of ammunition. We therefore decided to remain where we were and wait for the shelling to cease. After a few volleys "Jerry" increased the range, so that soon the shells were bursting directly in front of us, and uncomfortably close. The air was filled with gas and smoke. The frequent explosions sent clouds of rock and dirt in all directions, covering our soaking clothing with mud and causing more than one fervent prayer that the projectiles would not be changed to shrapnel.

The volley soon passed, however, and we rushed pell-mell down the hill to the gun emplacement, arousing the cannoneers from their peaceful slumbers and causing much anxiety for the safety of their camouflaged huts that lined the roadway. Looking back we saw another gust of fire sweeping the crest of the hill and blowing to pieces the very spot where we had halted but a few minutes before.

All that night we worked, enlarging the P. C. and hauling the dirt far out into the fields. The cold East wind blew across the bleak hillside, penetrating our soaked clothing and freezing us to the very marrow of our bones. Just as the pale grey light of dawn came creeping across the battlefield we crawled silently back to our camp and rolled into our blankets for a few minutes of sleep.

About an hour or so later we were awakened by the none too welcome call of "Come and get it." Tired as we were, the pangs of hunger soon overcame the desire for sleep, and in a very few minutes we were all devouring our syrup and bacon, feeling strength and youth return as each sticky mouthful slid home. It is life-giving stuff, this Army bacon, for we were all soon back at our daily monotonous job of watering, feeding and grooming.

Thus our life went merrily on during the entire war, varied only slightly by the long marches from one front to another. But even these hikes were tiresome enough. Although we were not disturbed by the whine of "Jerry's" shells we were supposed to ride for hours in true military fashion with "thumbs up and heels down." Most of us did not, of course, but this compelled us to keep always on the alert, and observe whenever an officer approached. Then we would take the position that best befitted the dignity and bearing of a true American soldier.

On these marches from our comfortable seat in the saddle, as we looked down upon the poor unlucky cannoneers humping their packs, and painfully picking out the soft spots whereon to place their tired, swollen feet, we were always reminded that we were not the most unfortunate men in the world. This feeling became a conviction when during our frequent halts we would stand sedately by and watch these "dugout kings" patiently transfer the juicy herbs of the wayside to the ravenous mouths of our weary animals.



*2nd Battalion O. P. on the Vesle front.*

## THE ADVENTURES OF AN OBSERVER.



N the night of September 23rd, while dozing by the side of the great highroad from St. Menehould to Verdun I was brought to my senses by the familiar cry "On your feet! Everybody up!" From down the road came the sound of horses and vehicles and then a long drawn out "H-a-l-t." The battery had arrived. We quickly slung our packs and fell in as the column moved past—greeting old friends here and there. There was Dan Philpot and Tommy Price and two gigantic feet protruding from the rear of a fourgon wagon and the rattle of a pick and shovel announced that old George Harknett was among those present.

I soon learned that the firing battery was on its way back to the lines and the dope at this point seemed to be that we were going to take over a quiet sector—in the Argonne Forest—while fresh troops were to start a great offensive elsewhere. The comparative quiet up ahead seemed to add weight to this idea, and I had visions of living in a hut amongst the pines—fishing in some mountain stream, perhaps—and now and then climbing a convenient tree to observe the Germans and see that they were behaving themselves.

About midnight, while the column was halted for a short rest, the Captain came up and engaged me in conversation. It occurred to me that he was giving me more than the usual amount of attention. "Are you ready to do some scouting, Corporal? To do some scouting, Corporal? Ready to do some scouting?" "Yes! Yes!" I assured him, having in mind, however, the pine tree and mountain stream kind of scouting. I thought no more of this conversation until the next morning, when, having snatched a few hours' sleep, I was summoned by the Captain. "Corporal," he said, "we are starting a big offensive on this front and your job will be to go along with the advance infantry to assist the regimental liaison officer. Report to Lieutenant Lunny at the 305th Infantry regimental headquarters at 4:00 to-day."

Long before this, of course, I had been disillusioned as to what we were going to do in this sector. Plainly we were not there just to hold the lines.



*Observation tree on Aisne front—looking  
down toward Aisne Canal, with Chemin-des-  
Dames in background.*

The imposing array of guns of all kinds told us plainly that something big was coming off and that we would be right in the middle of it. So I wiped out the mental picture of myself sojourning in the primeval forest and in its stead had a vision of myself securely planted in the top of a high tree overlooking the lines—seeing the whole show in comparative safety—and cheering on the doughboys pursuing the Germans as they tin-canned for the Rhine. But, of course, the little interview with the Captain had knocked the bottom right out of that lovely dream, too.

That afternoon Lieutenant Lunny outlined my work to me. I was to have charge of a detail of four men—two from E Battery and two from F, and our job would be to effect liaison between the advance infantry and our guns by means of telephone and runner. After one good night's sleep I was just preparing for another when the fateful message arrived. "Report at 305th Infantry regimental headquarters at 5:00 o'clock, ready to move."

It was pitch dark as we started off through the forest—several infantry officers in the lead, followed by a motley company of infantry and machine-gun runners. Each man guided himself by holding on to the pack of the man ahead of him. The path was rough and uneven as it wound up hill and down, while here and there shattered trees obstructed the way. Several times on steep descents the human chain broke and a struggling mass would be deposited in some gully. Such mishaps were taken good-naturedly, however, as the spirit of adventure was in us all by now. After about an hour's travel we picked our way through a long support trench and finally merged into a barren valley, through which coursed a sickly stream. The moon was coming up by now and the surrounding landscape could be plainly seen. Signs of death and destruction were everywhere. Through long years of war this once beautiful valley had been steadily reduced until now it presented the picture of a sandy waste peopled by stark and starving tree stalks.

In the usual democratic manner of the infantry officer of the front lines, the captain in command assembled everyone about him and informed them as to the situation. Our own front lines were just over the brow of the hill which rose up ahead of us. The hill extended to the north in the form of a plateau—and about 80 or 100 yards beyond our own front lines were the German forward positions. Under the brow of the hill, on our side, were several dugouts, caves and trenches. We were to make ourselves as comfort-



*Old French gun position used by 304 F. A.  
as observation post, Aisne sector.*

able as possible for the night and be prepared to move forward at a moment's notice. Absolute quiet was enjoined upon us, and as we approached the top of the hill shadowy sentinels warned us to keep our heads down and to stay under cover. After several hours' strenuous work I was able to report that communication was established, our detail having connected up our new position with a line that Lieutenant Rennard's details had run out from 304th F. A. headquarters that afternoon. We then looked around for a place in which we could get a wink or two of sleep. We soon found that everything had been grabbed by either officers or runners. I tried to worm my way into a cave full of runners—nothing doing—I couldn't even find a place to stand up. Off to the right I noticed a dugout. It looked very quiet round about it, neither packs nor guns outside, and I figured that it might have been overlooked. Crawling over on hands and knees I pushed the door cautiously open and my hopes went up as I saw that there was plenty of vacant space therein. Just then a voice from the corner: "Who is there?" "An artilleryman, looking for a place to sleep," said I. "There are officers in here," came back in icy tones. Hastily withdrawing, I crawled back to my original position—thanking the good Lord for the darkness that hid my blush of shame and humiliation over the terrible blunder. I finally crawled into a hole which I later found to be a latrine and managed to doze off.

A short time later I was awakened by a stir down the path. The dough boys were filing into the front-line trenches. With set and serious faces they trudged silently up the hill and took their places in the trenches. If there was any joking light-heartedness in their manner, such as we sometimes read about, it was not visible to me. Evidently they knew what they were up against.

Now our big guns are opening up. What has been a fitful fire all evening, an occasional shot off to our right or left, soon develops into a steady roar. For the first hour or so the fire seemed to be directed to the German back areas, but along about half-past three it seemed to come perceptibly closer



*Mine crater in No Man's Land, Argonne. Dark figure on far side is Harknett. Hole is 60 feet deep.*

and soon thereafter the shells came zipping down near the German front lines, seeming to scale our heads by a very narrow margin. So close they came, in fact, that I began casting my eye about for a spot that would offer some measure of protection from our own side.

Figuring out the chances for a "short," I began to run through my mind the dependability of some of the men on the guns. Let me see—there is Ned Van Buren—Van being a farmer might very well get rattled at the crucial moment. Then there is Old George Ulrich. I never thought much of UT's control and I hoped to Heaven that he would have more success at placing his shots than he had in locating the plate. Then a cold shiver ran down my back and perspiration stood out all over me. Shades of Heaven! Joachim Simas is on the guns. Then I remembered all the stalwarts on the guns—Barney Lowell, Walter Kotrba, Joe Lambe and many others—and I began to gain confidence.

At the first sign of dawn the barrage lengthened out perceptibly and as the shell-bursts moved away we knew that the doughboys were going over. We were all on our feet by this time prepared for anything. It was several hours, however, before we moved forward, and in the meantime the wounded and prisoners were moving to the rear in a steady stream. Several of the prisoners were interrogated by the infantry captain and it was curious to watch their demeanor. One old fellow was extremely nervous. He was very polite and servile and could not say enough good things about the Americans, the German army was in rout and the Kaiser was preparing to make his getaway. On the other hand another fellow was very surly and refused to stand up until he had been judiciously prodded with a bayonet.

We finally got the order to move forward and after filing 50 yards or so ahead to the front-line trenches, we climbed over the top and started down across No Man's Land. This No Man's Land was of the old 1914-1915 variety—simply a mass of churned-up wreckage—shell and mine craters 20 and 30 feet deep littered with wooden splinters and coils and strands of rusted barbed wire. Working our way slowly and laboriously through the wreckage, we finally gained the German trenches, only to find them reduced to the same chaotic condition by our recent fire. The sun was burning down out of a cloudless sky as we picked our way along—wringing wet with sweat and plastered with mud and grime.

At one point where we halted for a breathing spell I climbed up on the top of a small mound from where I could observe the country on the German side. Scattered bands of doughboys could be seen roving here and there in the foreground—evidently still engaged in "mopping up" activities. Occasional German shells splashed into the sea of wreckage out in front while from the fringe of woods a kilometre or so ahead came the angry, hysterical rattle of the enemy machine guns. We made our way steadily forward under improving conditions until about 4:00 in the afternoon, when we reached a deep trench about three kilometres beyond our position of the previous night. Here we spent the night, the officers and some of the runners in an excellent bomb-proof shelter—the rest of us in the trench itself. What with standing-room only, a drenching rainstorm, mud, cold, and heavy shell and machine-gun fire we spent a most miserable night and it was with a feeling of deliverance almost, that we watched the slow dawn of the new day.

With the sunshine came Walter Croy and Jack Thompson—fresh from an observing venture with Lieutenant Stevens. They had attempted to employ our usual tree method of observing, but in this forest jungle nothing of value could be accomplished. Inquiring of Croy as to the whereabouts of his inseparable companion, "Bennie" Freeman, I was informed that "Bennie" was holding discreetly to the rear and maintaining his usual prime running condition.

After another miserable night in the trench we moved rapidly forward and for several days sat by and hugged close to the ground as the doughboys worked around and snaked out the numerous machine-gun nests. It was a dirty dangerous job that they had, performed under the worst possible conditions of cold and rain and mud.

The eighth day out found us huddled in a shallow trench by the side of a road, which was effectively blocked by two very formidable machine-gun nests. Time after time platoons of doughboys disappeared into the jungle in an effort to clean out the guns. At each attempt a wild rattle of machine guns would be our warning to duck, while the bullets pinged and popped and snapped among us.

That afternoon Lieutenant Lunny informed us that our relief was on the way. So, exhausted from exposure and lack of sleep, it was with a feeling of thankfulness that we espied coming up the road the stalwart forms of Sergeant Page, Corporal Kominsky, Louis Fromm, and several other E Battery men, prepared to take over our mission.

Familiar faces were all along the homeward trail. There was Sergeant French riding over to the gun position, and a little further on the gallant Corporal McDonough in charge of a convoy of G. S. wagons, headed for the rear and furnishing a most welcome lift back to the battery.

# Roster

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Marshall, Thomas S.	Pvt.	Blasdell, N. Y.
Meyer, William A.	Pvt.	Montrose, Colo.
Migl, Willie J.	Pvt.	Flatonia, Fayette Co., Texas.
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Wodkins, John	Pvt.	Oneonta, Ala.
Wooten, James	Pvt.	Carthbert, Ga.
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Zwettler, George	Pvt.	Cleveland, Ohio.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. DEDICATION AND HONOR ROLL . . . . .	6-11
II. FOREWORD . . . . . Capt. Robt. V. Mahon	12
III. THE STORY OF BATTERY D	
Chapter 1. Camp Upton . . . . . Corp. Henry L. Miller	13-29
Chapter 2. The Trip Across and Early Days in France	Corp. Joseph Glass . 21-26
Chapter 3. Training Period at Camp de Souge . . . . .	" " " . 27-31
Chapter 4. At the Front—The Bac- carat Sector . . . . .	" " " . 32-35
Chapter 5. Vaxainville to the Nesle Woods . . . . .	" " " . 36-40
Chapter 6. The Vesle Sector . . . . .	" " " . 41-47
Chapter 7. Advancing to the Aisne River . . . . .	" " " . 48-54
Chapter 8. Going into the Argonne Forest . . . . .	" " " . 55-58
Chapter 9. The Argonne . . . . .	" " " . 59-67
Chapter 10. In Reserve . . . . .	" " " . 68-70
Chapter 11. Argonne—Meuse . . . . .	" " " . 71-77
Chapter 12. Our Last Front . . . . .	" " " . 78-82
Chapter 13. Lignerolles . . . . .	" " " . 83-89
Chapter 14. The Le Mans Area and Brest . . . . .	" " " . 90-94
Chapter 15. Homeward Bound . . . . .	" " " . 95-97
IV. AN INSIGHT INTO A DRIVER'S LIFE . . . . . Pvt. Osmund O'Brien	98-101
V. THE ADVENTURES OF AN OBSERVER . . . . . Corp. Henry L. Miller	102-106
VI. ROSTER OF BATTERY D . . . . .	107-111







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